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The Inward Turn: Reading Masochism in Latin literature

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For Bruce

"The jungle is dark but full of diamonds, Willy."

Death of a Salesman

Table of contents

Abstract

This thesis examines the masochistic persona in literature. Beginning with the Marquis de Sade's representation of masochism in *Justine*, it identifies three key tropes that make up the masochistic character: control, choice, and responsibility. These tropes are then applied to three classical texts: the *Satyricon*, the Lesbia poems of Catullus, and Seneca's *Thyestes*. The first section of this dissertation establishes the masochistic identities of these three characters: Encolpius is the masochistic victim of his own passive and submissive nature; Catullus' masochism manifests out of a distortion of his love for Lesbia; and Thyestes labours under masochistic delusion, as he is lured home to Argos by his desire for wealth.

After establishing the masochistic identity of these three characters, the second section analyses the impact that masochists have upon narrative. Both Justine and Encolpius are first-person, intradiegetic narrators, and as such their masochism directly affects the narrative. They interpret and relay information in an unreliable way, which is coloured by their individual masochistic characteristics. Catullus' narrative is similarly biased as a result of his masochism. His perception of his relationship with Lesbia is that she holds all the power, and that he is powerless; the reader has no access to Lesbia's voice, or to any other information that may mediate Catullus' perspective. Finally, Thyestes' masochism means that his narrative – framed as it is in a mimetic, dramatic form – does not have the power to become unreliable, because his passivity and masochistic delusion make him an unpersuasive character. Ultimately, this thesis illustrates that masochistic characters have a pervasive impact on the development of a text's narrative: by their nature masochists vacillate, and so they effectively prolong narratives, move them laterally, and, by their self-reflexive victimisation bring about critical shifts in the narrative.

Introduction

The Marquis de Sade is (in)famous for his depiction of the paraphilia to which his name is given, sadism. In portraying his sadists, Sade utilises their obverse, the masochist. These masochistic characters facilitate the exposition of sadism, and at the same time show the essential characteristics of prototype masochism. In this thesis, I use Sade's classic literary depiction of the masochist as a means of interpreting characterisation and narrative dynamics in three classical texts: Petronius' *Satyricon*, the Lesbia poems of Catullus, and Seneca's *Thyestes.* In the first section of this thesis, I identify three central tropes that Sade uses to characterise the masochist: control, choice, and responsibility. I use these tropes to frame subsequent discussion of characterisation in my chosen classical texts; here we will see that each of these texts features a central character – Encolpius, "Catullus" himself, and Thyestes – that displays significant masochistic traits. In the second section of this thesis, I consider the effect that these 'masochistic' characters have in shaping the texts containing them. We will see here that adopting a Sadean approach unifies narrative characterisation across a broad range of classical genres; that is, recognising characters as masochists makes explicit the effect that they have – or try to have – on the narrative, whether that be the classical novel, love poetry, or tragic drama. The transmission of the narrative varies, but a masochistic reading exposes both the way and the reason why these characters deny responsibility, submit to other characters, and make choices that perpetuate their suffering.

Masochism and sadism as labelled concepts are a relatively new idea, having only been so named by Richard von Krafft-Ebing in his 1886 *Psychopathia Sexualis.* The symptoms or commonalities of behaviour that make up these paraphilias, however, existed long before this point. Sade and Sacher-Masoch feature

sadomasochistic behaviour, which allows a reader to more readily appreciate the psychical structure of a sadist or a masochist. These texts feature many of the 'symptoms' that are part of being a sadist or a masochist, rather than characters only exhibiting one or two of the symptoms in isolation (Deleuze 1989, 15-16). Thus an examination of masochism that begins with Sade is helpful, to create a clear picture of a masochistic characterisation, and to clearly identify the boundaries of reading masochism in literature. This characterisation can then be used as a condign lens through which to examine classical texts, where masochistic characteristics may not be so readily identifiable. That is, where Sacher-Masoch and Sade have crafted narratives that hone in specifically on a binary representation of sadism and masochism, the classical texts have a wider focus, and transverse a greater range of subjects and characterisations.

In choosing *Justine* as my text, my reading is directed through a Sadean lens, that is as if I were Sade's ideal reader. I see Justine as masochistic because she refuses to see the sense of Sade's reasoning. That is, while today's reader may find it abhorrent, and see Justine as a pure victim, Sade created her for a different purpose. Embracing the position of ideal reader reveals Justine's masochism, and it reveals it in a way which provides a blueprint for reading masochism more broadly. Justine is essentially an empty vessel; she is a characterised veneer, through which Sade can channel only as much as he needs her to represent in order to tell his story. This thesis does not undertake a critical examination of the merits of *Justine*, but rather it takes the blueprint that Sade offers up and applies this to the classical texts, in order to identify points of masochistic commonality.

Krafft-Ebing's definition of masochism is coloured by both fictional and clinical information. As Schaffner (2011, 170-171) points out, Krafft-Ebing uses the

frequency of behaviours appearing in fiction as evidence of their existence. While this may be unsatisfactory from a psychological standpoint, from a literary viewpoint it makes clear that masochistic traits can be extracted from texts without characters showing all the relevant symptoms. Krafft-Ebing (1965, 86) defines masochism as the opposite of sadism:

> While the latter [sadism] is the desire to cause pain and use force, the former is the wish to suffer pain and be subjected to force. By masochism I understand a peculiar perversion of the physical sexual life in which the individual affected in sexual feeling and thought, is controlled by the idea of being completely and unconditionally subject to the will of a person of the opposite sex; of being treated by this person as by a master, humiliated and abused. This idea is coloured by lustful feeling; the masochist lives in fantasies, in which he creates situations of this kind and often attempts to realise them.

In this thesis I am focusing on the masochistic character, which stems from the same behavioural tropes that Krafft-Ebing defines here – which is commonly called masochistic perversion – but does not always carry an overt sexual component with it (Brenner 1995, 364).[1] Reik (2002, p. 198) likewise observes that masochism is no longer limited to a sexual sphere: 'The word [masochism] has outgrown its narrower, sexual meaning and has become dexualised.' The first section of Krafft-Ebing's definition here goes to the idea of possession, of allowing or wishing to be entirely possessed and subjugated by another person. The final sentence concerning

[1] Stoller (1991) similarly notes that masochistic pain can be 'psychic rather than physical'.

masochistic fantasy marries with Baumeister's theory of masochism as escape from self (1988, 36): that the act of fantasising, particularly fantasising about surrendering control, allows a masochist to escape from the realities of everyday life, and thus cede control to a third party. The masochist can then seek to turn this fantasy into a reality, by giving control over to that third party, to do as they wish. The poetic lover is a useful example of this: by making his woman cruel and his lover subjugated, the poet engages in a masochistic fantasy. Through the lover he realises a fantasy that is so very far removed from the real world (Conte 1994, 38), and as such is his realisation of a masochistic fantasy. The unwillingness of the lover, perhaps most prominent in the case of Catullus, is the dissonance between the lover's fantasy and his typical socio-cultural idealisation. This idea of realising a masochistic fantasy can be appreciated to varying levels. In the case of Tibullus, for example, it is a very potently realised fantasy, and there is a far sharper degree of complicity between the lover and state of servitude (Lyne 1979, 129); in Catullus there is disharmony between the two (cf. *odi et amo*, 85.1); and in Ovid the fantasy plays out as more of an exhibition of a fantasy, which parodies his contemporaries (Lyne 1979, 128). This idea will be returned to in the context of the interaction between masochism and the poetic trope of *servitium amoris.*[2]

Similarly, Reik (2002, 221), observes the importance of masochistic fantasy in both the sphere of sexual masochism and what he describes as 'social masochism', the latter being the primary concern of this thesis. Reik notes that in the social masochist, 'Phantasy… has spread over the whole life and fate of the person concerned, assigning him a certain role… The place of the sexual partner has been

[2] Copley (1947, 291) and Lyne (1979, 120-121) both dismiss the notion that *servitium amoris* is present in Catullus. I examine this idea in my first Catullus chapter, arguing that the trope is present in some form, though not as expressly as one sees it in Tibullus or Propertius. Catullus may not glorify servility in the same way as the latter poets do, but he is in a state of pseudo-servility, which he perceives as actual servility, and he perpetuates his own suffering by refusing to walk away from Lesbia.

occupied by higher forces; erotically tinged torment has been replaced by blows of destiny, which yet grant secret satisfaction.' Encolpius provides an excellent example of how this operates in the social masochist: Encolpius often becomes consumed with theatrical and melodramatic fantasies, turning everyday scenarios into the fantastic; in this way, he plays out his masochistic suffering, and gets enjoyment from it, even as he suffers.

Stoller (1985, 31) also addresses the point of masochistic performance, noting, 'Perversion is theatre, the production of a scenario, for which characters – in the form of people, parts of people, and nonhuman (including inanimate) objects – are cast. The performance is played before an audience, the crucial member of which is the perverse person viewing… himself or herself performing.' Again, this is something that we will return to when examining Encolpius, and it also applies to Thyestes, as he takes on the role of a Stoic Sage to feed his own masochistic delusions.

The idea of control is central to Sacher-Masoch's portrayal of the masochistic Severin in *Venus in Furs*, the text for which masochism was named, where Severin is singularly obsessed with enslaving himself to Wanda. Masochism here is equated with slavery, debasement and humiliation (Felski 1991, 1096). These are all facets of one way in which masochism manifests in Severin, one particular individual. Slavery in the case of Severin is illusory; he may be emotionally enslaved, and he may feel enslaved, but this is to a great extent self-imposed slavery.[3] It is this illusory slavery that needs to be focused on as a state of mind of the masochist, not as an actual state

[3] Wilke (1998, 250) discusses the contract that Severin drew up between himself and Wanda, which he never anticipated she would actually follow. We can conclude from this that the idea of entering into this contract of servility was Severin's preoccupation, over and above the actual state of servility to which he would eventually be subjected. I examine the notion of the masochistic contract in the second Catullus chapter, particularly by reference to the power dynamic that this creates between the masochist and their partner.

of servility, which anticipates Krafft-Ebing's identification of fantasy as a component of masochism. It is because of this perceived slavery that control is fundamental to the construction of masochism: masochists may seek control, are controlled, or lose control.

Choice is bound up in this theme of control, because a masochist may blame an external source, be that an individual, individuals, or a more ambiguous source, such as fate. The actual choice which they have made is de-individualised, as it were, perhaps because they do not want to accept the action or take responsibility for it, and therefore they place blame, control or responsibility elsewhere, alleviating their guilt and allowing them to repress their actual role in their situation. In Justine's case, what often separates her from the other victims of the libertines that she encounters is that they become consumed with debating their philosophical ideas with her. Justine continually makes the choice to argue with the libertines, putting forward her religious beliefs time and time again, despite that the same result occurs each time: she endures more torture and more pain because of this choice. She seals her fate with this choice, but she does not take responsibility for it, because she feels a compulsion to try to convert the libertines to Catholicism; she chooses victimisation over silence.

This idea of surrendering control is referential to Baumeister's discussion of masochism as a form of escape. Baumeister posits that awareness of self and one's responsibilities can become burdensome, and thus masochists may seek to separate themselves from their self-awareness in order to alleviate negative thoughts and feelings (Baumeister 1988, 29). Surrendering control, or feeling as if control has been taken from them, is a form of escapism, and important to the masochistic persona. A lack of proactivity for a masochist is a natural extension of this self-exclusion, because when a masochist deliberately surrenders their agency, they cease to take

initiative and are reactive rather than proactive (Baumeister 1988, 34). This is clear in Sade, particularly in *Justine*, where you see Justine's masochism juxtaposed with the sadistic nature of the libertines that she encounters (Pastoureau 1965, 49). Justine rarely acts proactively, and thus is trapped in a repetitive cycle of abuse and eventual escape; the sadists she encounters, by contrast, are meticulously organised, self-aware, and hence are comparatively proactive.

This introduces the other key facet of choice and control, responsibility. This is where victimisation enters the masochistic vocabulary, when a masochist chooses to make themselves the victim of a perceived injustice. Feeling aggrieved by something they have willingly committed, they lay blame elsewhere, allowing themselves to feel victimised and also allay any responsibility that they may bear. Repression is processed by the ego, when an action has been committed (or even imagined, as the id and superego (primarily) are both primary processes, and thus unconscious[4]) with which the conscious mind cannot cope (Kahn 2002, 22). Committing an action that has abrogated one's morality and belief system would be such an action; unable to cope with the associated guilt or distress from this action – coming from the critical super-ego – the ego can repress the action, or repress the facts of the action, thereby lessening the guilt that a person feels, particularly if responsibility can be placed on another, thereby allowing the individual to feel aggrieved at what has happened to them, rather than feeling culpable or remorseful (Freud 1995, 280).

It may be that this repression happens subconsciously, meaning that a masochist constructs a narrative that displaces responsibility, without consciously recognising that that is what they are doing. From that point they become so invested

[4] Kahn observes that: 'In the realm of primary process there is no distinction between fantasy and reality, between wish and action… should I long for a pleasure I believe is bad, I might be as guilty as if I had actually experienced it.'

in this externally placed blame that they cannot recognise the initial role that they played in it, or continue to play in perpetuating it. This can establish a repetitive pattern of behaviour, where a similar action is perpetuated, following the same arc as previous behaviours because the masochist is unable to realise that they are falling into the same trap, or believes that they are powerless to break the pattern. The monotony of Justine's encounters with the various libertines is an example of this: she steadfastly remains virtuous, and therefore inescapably behaves in the same way, because she cannot recognise a different pattern of behaviour that will free her from the cycle (Carter 1979, 51). Though she is not culpable for the tortures she endures, she cannot break the cycle of behaviour that leads her into these situations, and indeed on occasion chooses not to break the cycle. She represses the pain and the suffering she endures; she is constantly aware that she is a victim, and embraces this status, yet is not willing to jeopardise her morality in order to change it.

To anchor this discussion of control, choice, and responsibility, and to illustrate these characteristics at work in the masochist, an examination of Sade's story *Eugénie de Franval* is useful, as within this story the character of Franval transforms from a sadist to a masochist. A key element in Sade's construction of this transition is choice. It is a common misconception that masochists are entirely without choice; that they are victims, or slaves, or entirely submissive to the point where they have no free will. As Jones (2000, 204) points out: 'Masochism demands, as a precondition, a certain amount of agency that can be relinquished.' The very fact that something can be relinquished means that the masochist possessed it to begin with, and chooses to give it over. Sade chooses to emphasise the role that choice plays in the actions of a masochist. *Eugénie de Franval* provides a useful example of the role that choice and control play in the masochistic psyche. In reading *Eugénie*, I apply

Freud's structural model of the psyche, which is useful to bear in mind as we approach *Justine* and the other texts.

The basis of Freud's well-known theory is that the human psyche is made up of the id, the ego, and the superego, which all work to determine our actions. As Freud notes (1957, 15), 'The ego represents what may be called reason and common sense, in contrast to the id, which contains the passions.' Freud compares the id to a horse, and the ego to a rider, noting that, 'Often a rider, if he is not to be parted from his horse, is obliged to guide it where it wants to go.' That is, sometimes the ego must give in to the pleasure principle, and allow the id to think that it is getting what it wants. The superego exists to criticise the actions of the id, and, by extension, the ego (Freud 1957, 49). Freud theorises (1957, 49-50) that in a sadist the superego exerts a greater level of control over the ego, a point which I will return to in greater detail.

Boothby (2005, 71) argues that, 'The ego functions to categorise things and persons in the outside world (those with whom I identify versus those with whom I conflict, but even more importantly the ego discriminates between contending forces of my own desires (those of my impulses on which I will act versus those that I will refuse and repress.' In a masochist, the overriding (conscious or unconscious) desires of the id can make this discriminatory process somewhat latent, so that desires which should be repressed or refused are instead acted upon. Further to this, the critical element of the superego can be overridden by this impulsive action, so that externally unsanctioned or socially determined immoral acts can be rationalised and committed.

Part of Freud's argument on his psychic structures is that many elements of these three facets are unconscious or preconscious (1957, 3-5), referring to ideas or impulses that are unrealised or unformed, and also to ingrained ideas and themes that are so institutionalised that they are not consciously thought, but nonetheless exist.

Incest falls into this latter category: social taboos and social niceties or normalities, even, are so established that they are not necessarily given active thought or attention (Harari 1973, 1218). This is, in fact, something that Sade recognises and rebels against, finding it somewhat absurd and illogical that society willingly conforms to structures and strictures without consciously considering why and to what end they do so (Martin 1998, 105).

Nonetheless, incest is an understood cultural taboo, something which is unconsciously recognised and that which then arguably becomes a conscious realisation, should someone wish to commit it (Homer 2004, 43). This conscious realisation will result in one of two things: either the person will be revolted and/or ashamed and will reject the impulse (superego criticism being enacted by the ego); or they will willingly embrace it and in turn commit it (the id overriding the superego and forcing the ego to commit it). Sade's short story *Florville et Courval* is an example of the former, while his *Eugénie de Franval* is an example of the latter. In the latter story, Franval fastidiously and meticulously plans his seduction of Eugénie. It is initially a very cerebral seduction, but as the tale progresses and Franval's transition between sadist and masochist occurs, his actions become more impulsive and unplanned and ultimately, of course, prove disastrous.

Given that the superego processes social taboos and other social 'normalities' in order to criticise a person's adherence to a particular standard, it arguably follows logically that the superego also processes social hierarchies (Harding 2018, 34-35). For the most part this would be an unconscious process. For example, an aristocratic person does not consciously spend time thinking of how they can order a slave or mistreat a slave, nor does a slave, in fact, spend time thinking that they could or should obey orders; it is simply an active awareness that is processed unconsciously.

Thus, it also arguably follows that the only time the superego will actively criticise concerning social hierarchy is when these unconscious boundaries are about to be or are being transgressed.

If we accept that the Sadean sadist's superego operates on a different code to that of a non-sadist (taking this as 'normal', meaning the template by which Freud defined his system)[5] then it stands to reason that Franval's superego is regulated by a different moral code to that of his wife's, for example. Thus no internal objection is raised when he concocts his plan to raise Eugénie for the express purpose of her eventual seduction. (The obverse of this is interesting to consider: were Franval not to carry out this seduction, then how would his superego react, perhaps it would be critical of his decision not to behave in a way that it has sanctioned.)

In Franval's mind this course of action is entirely natural. He carefully plans his actions and these plans are meticulously carried out throughout Eugénie's youth. There is no impulsivity or unplanned action, which is critical to the success of his plan. One consequence of Franval's plan is that Eugénie is imbued with the same qualities. Like anyone, she has an embedded set of moral standards, which shape her superego; hers, however, are adopted from Franval. Thus she has no concerns about incest, because she has never been taught that it is wrong, or raised in an environment where it is recognised to be wrong, thereby forming the preconscious knowledge. There are no alarm bells that are set off within Eugénie's mind when incest is mentioned or considered, because there's no recognition of a societal boundary being transgressed. In fact, she has been taught that social boundaries or social transgressions are good, because they exist only to constrain and to hold back

[5] Meissner (2012, 245) argues that unregulated criticism, whether inward or outward, can affect superego morality, leading to the eventual remoulding of an individual's system of morals. Sadism is one type of criticism that the superego can engage in, which can then be turned inwards, or practised outwardly.

happiness from those who deserve it. In this way, she has both preconscious and conscious recognition that boundaries exist to be crossed, and that if crossing such a boundary will be pleasurable then it is essential that it should be done.

Pleasure, for a Sadean sadist, is cerebral before it is physical. The Sadean sadist plans, vocalises said plan and then carries out the plan, extracting as much pleasure from the former stages as the latter (Harari 1984, 1057). There is not so much pleasure in unplanned and unvoiced actions. This is why Franval's transformation from sadist to masochist begins when his id begins to play a larger and more dominant role. When his plans all come perfectly together and he fully possesses Eugénie, he begins (unplanned) to fall in love with her. He becomes obsessed with Eugénie, believes that he is in love with her, and can only think of her and how she makes him feel.

His actions become more unplanned and more unpredictable as time progresses, because he can only think of Eugénie and his desire for her. Franval needs Eugénie; she is no longer his victim but rather his equal, and they are entirely codependent. Franval's desires, his id, are controlling all his actions. When obstacles are placed in his way he reacts impulsively; all the proactive elements of his though process are disbanded, overridden by his desperate desire to have and to keep Eugénie. This is why he makes so many fatal mistakes, constantly revealing their relationship to people when he is overcome by a desire to brag or to shock, or is in need of assistance to continue his illicit relationship.

When his wife, Madame de Franval, becomes 'problematic', Franval and Eugénie concoct a plan that they think, mistakenly, will be fool-proof. They believe that Franval's friend, Valmont, will be able to seduce Madame de Franval, and thus, through this abrogation of her virtue, allow them some freedom, as she will be unable

to fault them because of her own hypocrisy (225). There are two mistakes made by Franval here. The first is to assume that the plan will work. Madame de Franval is a virtuous woman, and has no interest in Valmont's advances (263). The second critical mistake that Franval makes is to take Valmont into his confidence. This is something he does as a necessity to his plan, a plan which has not been cogently constructed, but rather based on a projection of his own inclinations onto the potential actions of his wife. Valmont becomes enamoured with Eugénie, and hatches a plan, with the support of Madame de Franval and her mother, Madame de Farneille, to abduct Eugénie from Franval and to bring her to Madame de Farneille's estate, with the eventual reward being that he will be allowed to marry Eugénie:

Franval, fully absorbed in his never-ending round of pleasures, fully counting on Valmont, fearing nothing more from Clervil, walked into the trap which had been set for him, displaying the same unsuspecting confidence that he so often hoped to find in others when he in turn schemed to make them stumble into his snares. (283)

Valmont kidnaps Eugénie after she leaves the Comedie Française, and they set off for Madame de Farneille's estate. Franval catches wind of the abduction and hastens after the carriage. When he arrives he is so enraged over Valmont's betrayal, and so unsettled by almost losing Eugénie, that he kills Valmont without a second thought. The consequence of this is that he must go into hiding to avoid being arrested. He retreats with Eugénie and Madame de Franval to Alsace, where he and Eugénie continue to concoct their plans to ruin Madame de Franval and to be together. When Franval receives word that Valmont's family and Madame de Farneille are intent on him being tried for Valmont's murder, Franval retreats to

Switzerland to avoid being arrested. Before he leaves he pleads with Eugénie to take a drastic course of action if the need arises, and to kill her mother (292-293).

Eugénie pledges her loyalty to Franval and he supplies her with poison to murder Madame de Franval. Franval departs for Switzerland; however, he soon becomes worried, when he stops receiving letters from Eugénie:

Franval grew concerned. And no more satisfied by the posts which followed, he grew desperate and, his impulsive nature making it impossible for him to wait, he immediately formulated a plan to return to Valmor himself to discover the reason for the delays which made him worry so cruelly. (296)

This is an explicit recognition of how uncontrolled Franval's behaviour has become. He is no longer the calculating, cruel, and cunning character that he was at the beginning of the text; he is irrational, impulsive, and paranoid. The cerebral power that is the marker of the successful Sadean sadist has vanished, and he is controlled entirely by his desires and by his impulses. He panics that he has lost Eugénie and so he dashes off into the night, with no plan and little thought of the dangers that might await him. Unsurprisingly, this plan also comes undone for Franval; he and his single valet are set upon by a band of thieves near the boundary of his estate. Franval's valet is killed and Franval is robbed of everything except his sword.

This misfortune, coupled with the wild weather and Franval's sense of foreboding as to what might be awaiting him at Valmor, conspires to bring about a complete change in Franval's attitude. He feels immense remorse for what he has done to his wife and Eugénie, the steps that he has taken to satisfy his desires, and rues everything that has brought him to his current situation. This remorse is another

emotional indulgence. Franval's superego is not programmed to induce feelings of remorse or guilt. It criticises him when he takes inappropriate action that does not necessarily serve a positive purpose, but it does not induce remorse. This reaction is a combination of realising that his plans – once so carefully made and actioned – have fallen apart and that there is nothing left for him of the prosperity he once had. This realisation combines with his newly discovered irrational emotions to project this misery onto his actions against others, and therefore feel remorse for what he has done to them and to himself. Eventually, Franval, overcome with grief and remorse, kills himself (303).

The transformation of Franval from sadist to masochist is extremely useful for appreciating what qualities are central to the construction of masochistic personalities in texts. The role of the id, of rationality and impulse control are integral to a masochist's behaviour. An inability to stop oneself from committing a particular action is key: there is a particular obsession which a masochist has that makes it difficult for them to stop behaving in a particular way. Reik (2002, 235) refers to this as the demonstrative element of the masochist's personality. Submission is central to this perspective, but does not necessarily mean that a masochist is submissive in a literal sense: it is more like a submission to an obsession of which they cannot rid themselves. They can be cognisant of the obsession, cognisant of the way that that obsession makes them behave, and yet still submit to that obsession when it is once again offered. Justine's commitment to her religion, no matter the difficulties it causes her, is an example of this, particularly her need to actively speak of her religious views, when it may be better to remain silent.

In the case of Franval, he begins the text with a particular set of plans in mind. He wants to raise his daughter with the same values that he holds, and he wants to

seduce her. This plan, however, does not account for the fact that he is going to become obsessed with Eugénie, fall in love with her, and that he will be unable to stop himself from committing any action he deems necessary to have Eugénie. This is where he moves from sadist to masochist. A sadist does not *need* or become infatuated; they are entirely insulated and self-sufficient. Franval can no longer survive or exist without Eugénie; he is entirely reliant on her and his desires for her.

Thus his plans and processes lose all cogency and rationality. He does not spend enough time thinking of possible outcomes and possible behaviours; he simply reacts to the moment and acts accordingly from there. His id takes over, leading to consistently irrational and impulsive actions that ultimately lead to the murder of Valmont, and the unravelling of the entire story. Returning to the tropes of control, choice, and responsibility, we can see how these play out in Franval. He surrenders control to Eugénie and to his desire for her; he is compelled to do whatever it takes to please Eugénie and to keep Eugénie for himself. In surrendering this control, he continually makes choices that his former sadistic self would not have made, choices that ultimately will have irrevocable consequences because they are made on impulse, not made after careful consideration and planning. Finally, he denies responsibility right up until the very end of the text, because he believes that he has no choice but to behave in the way that he does. Rather, the responsibility rests with the people who have 'forced' him into these actions, such as his wife and his former confidant, Valmont.

Thus, bearing these things in mind, I now outline the structure of this thesis. I begin in section 1 with *Justine*. The character of Justine is a fruitful starting point, because, as discussed earlier, her primary purpose is *to be* a masochist, and to facilitate Sade's exploration of his sadistic libertines. As Pastoureau (1965, 49)

identifies, 'Sade's Justine is a prototype of pure masochism, a prototype more meaningful than any of the self-observations Sacher-Masoch projected into his imaginative works… Sade, a finer psychologist than Sacher-Masoch, created his Justine only to offset the sadism of the characters who are associated with her.'[6] This makes *Justine* a text from which a clear picture of masochism can be garnered, as Sade uses Justine as a methodological tool that gives primacy to his libertines. As Fromm (1941, 144) points out, one facet of a sadistic personality is to wield absolute power over their victim, 'to make them nothing but instruments, "clay in the potter's hand".' Justine's masochism, which stems predominantly from her Catholic beliefs, makes her the ideal victim.

Religious masochism accounts for much of Justine's behaviour, and taps into the wider symbolism of her character within the novel. *Justine* is a novel to which Sade returned twice in his life, with each version becoming longer, more violent, and Justine's adventures becoming ever-more harrowing. Sade used Justine as a representation of French society, and inscribed the social issues, as Sade perceived them, onto her body (Dipiero 1995, 248). Originally identified by Freud in his 1924 essay 'The economic problem of masochism', moral masochism is the root of religious masochism, and stems from an overtly critical superego (1995, 282). As Charme (1983, 225) discusses: 'Christianity also gives dramatic expression to the tendency of masochists to identify themselves with the body of the all-powerful object of their love… The individual Christian, moreover, sacrifices his individual

[6] My reading of *Justine* is strongly influenced by Pastoureau's work on Sade, which addresses the prototype nature of Justine's masochism, and, more importantly, identifies that sadomasochism is not a uniform paraphilia: 'in the spectrum of human behaviour, sadomasochism does not appear as a single vertical ray clearly differentiated from its neighbours, but rather as a horizontal ray which crosses through all the vertical rays' (1965, 51) The multiplicity of manifestations of sadomasochistic behaviours is a critical starting point for my reading of masochism in antiquity, because I do not seek to argue that masochism looks identical in each character, or that each author deliberately set about to create a masochistic character, but rather that the nuances of the masochistic persona are wide and varied, and can be grouped under several key ideas.

self in order to become part of the body of Jesus.' Linked closely with this idea of self-sacrifice is the notion of delayed reward: that the masochist endures suffering on earth because they see it as a sign that God loves them more (Charme 1983, 223).

This commitment to an external force – here religion – is what Fromm (1941, 155 ff.) terms a secondary bond, where one surrenders a part of oneself to a greater power. This surrendering alleviates the masochist's need to make decisions purely by themselves: 'The masochist… is saved from making decisions, saved from the final responsibility for the fate of his self, and thereby saved from the doubt of what the meaning of his life is or who "he" is' (Fromm 1941, 156.). The central way this manifests in Justine's persona is that her behaviour is entirely dictated by her Catholic beliefs. Examining Justine's interactions with the libertines broadly, and the inherent differences in Sade's representation of sadism and masochism, clearly shows how Justine's secondary bonds cause her a variety of problems. Examining specifically her interactions with two libertines, Clément and Roland, illustrates how Justine's stubborn adherence to her Catholic virtues means that she does not listen to the libertines, and in turn cannot learn, thus facilitating the cyclical nature of the novel.

Justine illustrates the three primary characteristics of control, choice, and responsibility that I have discussed. While Justine exercises great self-control of her body, she is compelled to be not only guided by her religious principles, but to constantly vocalise them. She makes the active choice to try consistently to persuade the libertines of her views, which often earns her additional attention and additional punishment. Often there is a moment where Sade gives Justine an opportunity to escape her tortures, or to give up her victim status, but she repeatedly makes the choice to continue to stand by her religious tenets, and thus continues her torture. Finally, Justine denies responsibility for her choices and her actions because she

cannot see that she could behave in any other way; she frequently laments that there was only one path open to her, when in fact this is not the case.

In the following chapter I examine the *Satyricon*, taking the inherent masochistic characteristics that I have extracted from *Justine* and identifying similarities in Encolpius' behaviour. The central difference in how Encolpius' masochism manifests is that his is not religious masochism, as it is with Justine, but is tied more generally to Encolpius' continual surrendering of his agency. This chapter examines Encolpius' behaviour and mood during the Quartilla episode (16-25), and his relationship with Giton. From this examination we can conclude several key things concerning Encolpius' masochism: particular emotions, such as fear, love and lust, agitate him, and encroach on his ability to make cogent decisions and have control over his emotions. When Encolpius becomes particularly agitated, be that through being fearful, lustful or broken-hearted, his ability to think and act sensibly becomes (further) impaired. In this impaired state, he surrenders his agency, whether consciously or unconsciously, and allows himself to be controlled by others. He will choose to defer to another over making any proactive decisions himself, being unable to realise what the proactive course would actually be, or incapable of carrying it through even if he is aware of it. Finally, when Encolpius is in an agitated emotional state it is easy to take advantage of him, which we see occurring in many different ways throughout the text: Quartilla takes advantage of him in manipulating him into her strange ritual (17-25); Ascyltus takes advantage of him to run off with Giton (79-80); Eumolpus takes advantage of him when they meet in the gallery (83-90), amongst other occasions; and Giton, of course, constantly plays on Encolpius' emotional state to get what he wants. Encolpius accedes to these various manipulations with varying degrees of happiness, but he *does* accede to them. Even

when he is being abused at the hands of Quartilla and her cohorts, or Giton is taken away from him, he lets it happen. He is incapable of not allowing these actions to happen.

Taking up Conte's argument that Encolpius is a 'mythomaniac' (1996, 5), I argue that Encolpius deliberately styles himself as a victim or hero to displace his mundane existence, which in turn relates to Baumeister's theory that masochists surrender both control and self-awareness as a form of escapism (1988, 35-36). A useful example of this is when Ascyltus, Encolpius and Giton part ways, and the scene moves through various parodies of, *inter alia*, elegy and tragedy (Barchiesi 1999, 129), and Encolpius takes on the roles of Theseus, Achilles, and Aeneas. After losing Ascyltus and Giton, Encolpius takes refuge in a gallery, where he meets Eumolpus. Eumolpus is another character who easily controls and manipulates Encolpius, by taking advantage of his discombobulated state; in this way, a comparison of the two men clearly reveals Encolpius' masochism.

My primary goal in the first *Satyricon* chapter is to illustrate the behavioural commonalities across the separate scenarios that I examine. Identifying masochistic consistency in Encolpius' behaviour promotes Encolpius as the link between the disparate episodes of the text, rather than a forward-moving plot. I will discuss the structure of the text further shortly. A masochist is an ideal character to direct a plot that does not move forwards, but rather moves sideways, because the masochist, by their very nature, tends to vacillate, and to become stuck in a kind of stasis. If Encolpius were not a masochist, scenes like the Quartilla episode may very well be over before they really began. His masochistic nature is what facilitates the meandering nature of the text.

Next, I examine Catullus, and my approach within this thesis is entirely based on a reading of the Catullan character. By buying into the character that the poet creates, I read the Lesbia poems as a cycle from which one can reconstruct a narrative of masochistic dependency and denial. This allows greater linear movement through the poems, not necessarily reading them in their current arrangement, but through the development of the Catullan character's mood and attitude towards Lesbia. It is for that reason that I begin my analysis with poem 51, which is notionally the first time that Catullus encounters Lesbia. It is this poem that establishes the qualities that mark Catullus as a masochist, which then guides my reading of the subsequent Lesbia poems.

For the Catullan character, masochism is a distortion of love. In this regard, Fenichel (1945, 352) argues that masochistic love is an amplification of infatuation, and that the masochist surrenders their autonomy to the object of their love. Poem 51 shows this amplification of infatuation clearly. Taking the sense of powerlessness that Catullus expresses in poem 51, I then examine poems 5 and 7, in which Catullus defines his love for Lesbia. This gives substance to why Catullus finds himself powerless against Lesbia, because he defines his love for her in a way that hands over all control to Lesbia herself. I use as my starting point for this Conte's insightful examination of the love poet's construction of the erotic world (1994, 35 ff.). Here Conte (1994, 37) argues that the world is reduced to a 'partial field of vision', which theoretically contains in microcosm all that the lovers need, but that this 'precarious equilibrium' (42) can be ruptured by the outside world impinging on this microcosm,

forcing the lover to reintegrate outside values into their world.[7] I utilise this reading to analyse some of the later Lesbia poems, and read Catullus' reintroduction of Roman concepts, such as *fides*, in the light of this 'precarious equilibrium'. The more that Catullus becomes disillusioned with Lesbia, the more Roman concepts he tries to reintroduce into their relationship, in an attempt to regain the power that he feels he has lost.

Charme (1983, 222) outlines the sacrifices a masochist will make to prove their love, most relevantly here: 'The more suffering he is willing to endure, the greater his love must be.' This idea is integral to my reading of Catullus' masochism: because he suffers, and sees his suffering as directly linked to Lesbia's faults, then his love is greater for it. This notion is succinctly captured in poem 75, where Catullus reflects on what Lesbia has reduced him to (*huc est mens deducta tua, mea Lesbia, culpa*, 75.1), and yet how he cannot stop loving her (*nec desistere amare*, 75.4).[8]

Catullus' masochism also perpetuates the Lesbia narrative. Were Catullus not a masochist, had he not surrendered his patriarchal agency to Lesbia, then arguably the obstinacy he tries to show in poem 8 would have actually been realised, and the narrative might have come to an end much earlier.[9] Thus, in reading the Lesbia poems, I seek to draw out how Catullus' masochism enables the length and power of the narrative, pulling Catullus between love and hate alternately, and that ultimately it

[7] Conte's work on the construction of the elegiac world of the love poet is central to my reading of Catullus, which focuses in on the exclusive amatory world that Catullus designs for himself and Lesbia. My reading diverges from Conte's in that I focus primarily on that construction being one of the poetic persona, rather than the poet Catullus. I approach "Catullus" as a masochist in the same way as one would approach an analysis of *servitium amoris* in love poetry, by focusing exclusively on the poetic persona.

[8] Fromm (1941, 157) discusses that a basic antagonism remains for the masochist, when he tries to submerge himself in the masochistic bond, that is to surrender his autonomy to another person. In Catullus we see this antagonism emerge as a consequence of his frustration with Lesbia, because she is not confirming to the idealisation that he designed for the two of them.

[9] As Stoller (1985, 31) notes, a feature of masochism is that things are often not resolved and thus cannot be given up, 'The pain and frustration of earlier times live on unresolved, carried within, always a potential threatening force motivating one to resolutions that never quite work, to an undoing never quite done.' Poem 8 is a clear example of this, where Catullus tries so hard but cannot ultimately compel himself to give up on Lesbia.

is this prolonging of the masochistic Lesbia narrative that reveals the arc itself to be a literary device, and hence why my reading is based entirely around the character of Catullus.

The final chapter of section 1 examines Seneca's *Thyestes*. Primarily, I draw out Thyestes' masochism by comparing his characterisation with Atreus'. Atreus shows a focused determination to take his revenge on Thyestes, and he harnesses his *furor* to control his behaviour and actions. My reading of Atreus' behaviour and convictions is in line with Davis' discussion of Atreus as a paradoxical embodiment of the Stoic Sage (2003, 66). This reading of Atreus hones in on his single-mindedness, allowing me to draw out a comparison between Atreus and Sadean sadists. Atreus, like Sadean sadists, displaces a more 'traditional' moral system and replaces it with one of his own making, which serves his own benefits. As Davis (2003, 65-66) remarks: 'He is indifferent to the trappings of power: his concern is for power itself, not the accompanying glitter (211f.). He is indifferent to the concerns for life and personal safety, since he rates his own life at nought if he can obtain revenge against his brother (190f.).' Atreus prioritises his revenge above all else; his behaviour is methodical, meticulous, and regimented, much like the behaviour of Sade's libertines.

In contrast, Thyestes demonstrates a vacillating mindset, and allows others to determine his own fate. I argue that his temperament is an intrinsic part of his masochistic persona, and stems predominantly from paranoia and masochistic delusion. Paranoia works differently in masochists than in others. Bak's theory of paranoia (1995, 182 ff.) directs my analysis in this regard, where I take the central clinical concepts and apply them in a literary context. Bak argues (1995, 191) that the masochist seeks to suppress paranoia by means of masochistic delusion, where the

masochist refuses to address the cause of their paranoia and instead retreats into masochistic passivity. In examining Thyestes, I combine my reading of Bak with Schiesaro's analysis of engaging with irrational dimensions of the self in *Thyestes* (2003, 221). Schiesaro argues that a refusal 'to engage with the irrational dimension of the self… ultimately results in a mutilation, if an outright denial, of the self.' While Atreus addresses his doubts and fears about his plan, and subsequently overcomes that paranoia (cf. 283-286), Thyestes ignores his fears, and cedes agency and control to Tantalus.

Thyestes' conversation with Tantalus clearly evinces his masochistic persona. He initially recognises his unwillingness and uncertainty about returning home (423-428), and admits to Tantalus that he does not know exactly what he fears, but yet he does (*nihil timendum video, sed timeo tamen*/ I see nothing to be feared, but still I am afraid, 435).[10] It is here that Thyestes' masochistic delusion begins to manifest, as he retreats into a quasi-Stoic dialogue, where he speaks as a man who has no desire to reclaim former power, but is instead satisfied by the tranquil life that comes from living with nature (446-470). Instead of facing his doubts and addressing them, Thyestes retreats into masochistic delusion, which conceals the real reason that he is returning home: because he desires the wealth and power that goes along with the throne.

The second masochistic element to Thyestes' persona that I address is his subconscious need for punishment, stemming from his guilt complex. In this vein, my interpretation is informed by Nacht's work on the guilt complex within the masochistic persona, which focuses on the inward turn of aggression (1995, 18-34). Thyestes readily admits to Atreus that he is guilty of all that Atreus thinks of him

[10] All Latin translations in this thesis are my own, except where otherwise stated.

(512-516). This confession of guilt is largely unprompted; indeed, as Boyle (2017, 281) observes, Thyestes' language prior to this suggests he has come ready to defend himself, but instead he hands himself over to Atreus for punishment. Finally, I argue that these two forms of masochism explain the recurring theme of *nolle* that is associated with Thyestes (cf. 420; 950; 965; 985).

These two elements of his masochistic persona pull him in different directions, so that eventually Thyestes chooses to cede control firstly to Tantalus, and then to Atreus. Ultimately, this chapter engages in a binary reading of Atreus and Thyestes, showing the similarities of the two brothers (kings, exiles, power-hungry), and how their individual personas are critical to the success that they enjoy. Because Thyestes is a masochist, he will never succeed; he does not have the psychological awareness or skill to defend himself against Atreus. A masochistic reading of Thyestes also unites the disparate elements of his personality under one behavioural trope. Thyestes is a failed Stoic, a failed exile, and a failed king because of his masochism.

At the conclusion of the first section we will have a clear picture of the parameters of masochism, and how each character fits within these parameters. The first section identifies three particular traits that are intrinsic to reading masochism: control, passivity, and responsibility. Masochistic characters surrender their agency, choosing to submit to the will of another person, or a situation, rather than trying to assert themselves; they may choose to be controlled, and are unable to extricate themselves from that control; and, finally, they refuse or are unwilling to accept responsibility for any consequences that may come about as a result of when they surrender their agency.

In the second section I show the link between a masochist and the narrative. The actual impact that the masochist has on the narrative can vary, depending on how

the narrative is transmitted, that is, the generic degree of narrative control held by the masochist. Where Justine and Encolpius hold the position of first person, diegetic narrators, and thus their masochistic narration is directly conveyed to the reader, a character such as Thyestes is just one part of a larger mimetic narrative, and thus his impact on the development of the narrative is more complex and nuanced. It is for that reason that I approach the final Seneca chapter in a different way, using it to show that *because* he is a masochist, he cannot take a prominent role within the drama, as Atreus does, and thus he cannot mislead the viewer or reader. He may be akin to an unreliable narrator, in that his words are an inaccurate representation of his genuine feelings and beliefs, but he does not have the power to lead the reader astray with these inaccuracies.

In the first two chapters particularly, my understanding of unreliability is directed by employing Phelan and Martin's theory of unreliable narration. This theory marries well with reading a character who is unreliable because they are a masochist. The six types of unreliable narration that Phelan and Martin identify are misreporting, misreading, misevaluating (misregarding), underreporting, underreading, and underregarding (Phelan and Martin 1999, 95). I outline them here by reference to examples from the *Satyricon*, as Encolpius embodies essentially all of these forms of unreliability. Misreporting occurs because the narrator has misunderstood, has been confused, or lacks the requisite knowledge to understand. Misreporting typically occurs with misreading and/or misevaluating, as they all stem from the same comprehension difficulties. Misreading occurs when a narrator lacks the knowledge and perception to make a particular claim; this could be because a narrator has limited experience, and cannot truly understand what is happening, or when a narrator imposes their own prejudices in stating their views and opinions. Misregarding

involves a failure of ethics and evaluation; a narrator may make an ethical evaluation, or perceives something about another character that does not seem genuine. Taking Encolpius as an exemplar for these types of unreliability, at the *Cena Trimalchionis* Encolpius misreports, misreads, and misevaluates because he does not understand; he is confused; he is overwhelmed. An example of both misreporting and misreading is when Encolpius first arrives at Trimalchio's house, and is confused by the *caue canem* (29). Encolpius gives a detailed account of his surroundings, only to then be entirely taken in by the sight of the mural. He misreads the mural, thinking that it is a real dog, and he misreports the sighting. Instances of misreading, along with misregarding and misreporting, are peppered throughout the *Cena*, as Encolpius is unable to judge correctly the behaviour of Trimalchio and his cohort.

The other three types of unreliable narration – underreporting, underreading, and underregarding – relate to the quality and quantity of information that a narrator transmits to the reader. Underreporting is when a narrator provides less information than they possibly could. An example of this in the *Satyricon* is the Quartilla episode. Encolpius, Ascyltus, and Giton, apparently at some point earlier in the text, have interrupted Quartilla conducting secret Priapean rites. We know this because Quartilla's maid states that they have interrupted Quartilla's mystic rites (16), and because Quartilla herself states that she's concerned that they will make public that which they observed in the shrine of Priapus (17). This is the only information that we are offered; we do not know when these events happened in the context of the very murky timeline we have, nor do we know even approximately where it took place. Encolpius himself does not fill in this additional information for the reader, despite having the ability to do so. Underreading means that a character lacks the knowledge, perception, or sophistication to facilitate an accurate interpretation of a character or

their actions (Phelan and Martin 1999, 96). This is a difficulty Encolpius frequently encounters, including in his encounters with Quartilla, Trimalchio, and Eumolpus.[11] Finally, underregarding means that a narrator tries to make an ethical judgment, but does not push it far enough to be entirely correct (Phelan and Martin 1999, 96). In the *Satyricon*, Encolpius frequently fails to have an accurate understanding of people's characters; the convoluted love triangle between him, Ascyltus, and Giton is a relevant example of this.[12]

There are several layers of narration in *Justine,* and this adds to the text's interpretive complexity. Firstly, there is Sade's opening dedication, which appears to steer the reader towards a sympathetic reading of Justine's misadventures. There is then the opening and concluding remarks to the text, made by an extradiegetic reader, who introduces the reader to Justine and her sister Juliette, and sets up Justine's external and internal narration. The extradiegetic narrator likewise seems to urge a sympathetic reading of what befalls Justine. Justine's own narration operates on two levels: the 'interior' Justine, who is experiencing her misfortunes directly, and the 'exterior' Justine, who is retelling her misfortunes to Madame de Lorsange (in fact her sister Juliette) whilst awaiting execution. Behind all this is the implied author, Sade, and what we know now, from arguably a more privileged point of view than his contemporaries, of his own vices and predilections.

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[11] Slater (1990, 55-56), in examining Encolpius' early interaction with Trimalchio, identifies Encolpius' struggle in this regard: 'We see Trimalchio in pieces: his bald head, red tunic, green ball, silver chamber pot, and large entourage of slaves. Encolpius does not supply up with any synthesis of these details other than to marvel at them (*miremur,* 27.4) and conclude what he already knows, that Trimalchio is rich. Any further synthesis, if one is possible, is left to the reader.' Encolpius frequently makes a variety of observations about what is happening around him, but lacks that extra cognitive step, in which he brings these observations together and makes an evaluation.

[12] In the first chapter I examine Encolpius' relationship with Giton, and his failure to appreciate Giton' character. As Arrowsmith (1966, 327) explores: 'Encolpius' deepest trait is innocence; he is either beyond or below good and evil. His love for Giton is, true, pederasty, but it is also love… If we recognise Encolpius' deformity and pathos, we are almost meant to recognise that he is not a monster, but pathetic.' Here I would say that Encolpius' deepest trait is gullibility, which is perhaps a more pointed form of innocence, and it accounts in many ways of Encolpius' repeated failures to make judgments about people.

I begin by examining Sade's dedication, and how that relates to the philosophical nature of the sublime. I then examine the implied author, and how ultimately Sade's views, which we can access from his personal writings, and pamphlets such as *Français, encore un effort si vous voulez être républicains*, show that his views are more in line with those of his libertines than of the staunchly Catholic Justine. I then build on Edmiston's point that 'if there is a communication between the implied author of a text and the reader, at the expense of the unknowing narrator, we can say that the implied author is ironic and that the narrator is unreliable' (1987, p.148). This establishes one level of unreliability in *Justine*, that her perspective is so at odds with that of the implied author, and thus theoretically at odds with the message that he seeks to convey.

I illustrate these layers of narration through examining the Bressac episode, which also shows the levels of unreliable narration between the two versions of Justine. Justine is frequently guilty of underreading, underregarding and underreporting, which links back to her masochistic nature. Her lack of comprehension, which I explored in the first Sadean chapter, plays a prominent role in this unreliability, and stems directly from Justine's masochism. Justine cannot understand the perspective of the libertines because it is outside the bounds of her religious beliefs, and often is in direct contravention of them. This lack of comprehension is evident in not only the interior Justine, who immediately hears these diatribes, but the exterior Justine, who still will not comprehend them, nor see any advantage in trying to comprehend them. This means that Justine is underregarding, because she does not interpret events in the same way as the implied author arguably wants them to be interpreted. Justine also frequently withholds information, because she deems it too shocking to relay to the reader. This is a clear

example of underreporting, because she makes a deliberate decision to withhold information from the reader, and thus denies the reader the opportunity to interpret that information for themselves.

Finally, I look at the concluding remarks of the extradiegetic narrator, who urges the reader to take away the message that virtue is the source of true happiness. This message, like the opening, is at odds with the body of the text. Justine's virtue is the locus of her masochism, and thus the source of her suffering. Thus, the dedication, and the opening and closing remarks of the extradiegetic narrator, are geared towards supporting Justine's narration, but it is ultimately her own masochism that undermines the course of the text, bringing it more in line with the views of the implied author. Sade characterises Justine in a way that equates masochism with unreliability – that is, if she were not a masochist then she would not withhold information, impress on the reader her own ethical judgments, and misread situations because of her religious faith – thereby impressing on the reader the comparative 'virtue' of the philosophy that he expounds.

Next, I turn to the *Satyricon* once again. Here I use Encolpius' masochism to bind a character-based reading of the text. Encolpius, as a masochistic narrator, is our constant throughout the text; though his behaviour may be impulsive and chaotic, it focuses the text in the moment, which I argue was Petronius' overall purpose. Building on Schmeling's theory that Petronius wrote episodes of the *Satyricon* for group recitation (1991, 371), and that each episode parodied a particular genre, I argue that each episode is self-contained, rather than each episode building towards some final point of plot resolution, like a homecoming. I argue that Encolpius is the link between these self-contained stories, and that Encolpius, as a masochist, is ideally suited to the genre-hopping that Petronius would have him do. Because of the

passivity and malleability that his masochism causes, Encolpius can be shunted from genre to genre, place to place, and situation to situation, and he will follow the lead of whoever controls him there.

To test this proposed reading, I examine the *Cena Trimalchionis*, the only near-complete episode that we have in the extant text. This episode brings Encolpius' unreliability as a narrator into focus, as he struggles to comprehend what is happening around him, and repeatedly misreports his observations, imposing his own (often incorrect) interpretations onto the (often suspecting) reader. As the *Cena* continues, Encolpius makes repeated errors, until eventually he decides to stop asking questions entirely. It is at this point that Encolpius takes almost a backseat as a primary narrator, and starts to report directly the speech of Trimalchio and company. This allows the quasi-sympotic genre to be exploited fully, as Trimalchio and the other storytellers to step into the limelight. My analysis here complements other scholarship on unreliable narration in the *Cena*, namely Rimell (2002), Slater (1990), and Knight (1989), *inter alios*, but my reading diverges by asserting that it is Encolpius' masochism that is the cause of his unreliability. It is within the *Cena* that Encolpius' masochism, particularly his passivity and overawed nature, coalesces with his narrative difficulties, clearly illustrating the causal link between the two.

In the final Catullus chapter, I examine Catullus' relationship with Lesbia via the masochistic contract. Catullus' relationship with Lesbia lends itself to this kind of contractual reading in a way that the other texts do not, because the masochistic contract typically applies to a monogamous, sexual relationship. While technically Encolpius may fall under this umbrella, the same exclusivity does not arise between Giton and Encolpius as that which exists between Catullus and Lesbia. This is coupled with Catullus' propensity to introduce contractual language himself (cf.

aeternum sanctae foedus amicitiae, 109.6). Smirnoff's work on the masochistic contract (1995, 65ff.) is integral to my understanding of the clinical workings of the contract, and the literary examinations of Deleuze (1989) and Kazarian (2010) have both informed my reading of Catullus. While current psychological theory on the contract argues that there must be an actual contract, not a figurative one, my purpose in using this theory is to interrogate the mechanism behind the contract, and to see how this reveals the tautological nature of Catullus' suffering. The masochistic contract works on two levels: the way it is perceived by the masochist themselves, and the way that the outsider perceives it. The masochistic contract refers to the terms upon which a relationship between a masochist and an executioner – as Smirnoff (1995, 65) terms the other party – operates. As the masochist sees the relationship, they surrender all their rights to the executioner, and thus the executioner holds all the power. When the masochist suffers, he feels that he is powerless to alter his suffering, because he has surrendered all his powers to the other party.

The outside perspective of the masochistic contract illustrates that the power structure is not as the masochist would have us believe. From the outside we can perceive that the masochist is seeking to make the executioner's task much harder. As Smirnoff (1995, 65) outlines: 'The whole setting tends to harness the victim's delight, not to be simply defined as the agonising pain of the masochist, but to define, and refine, the respective positions of the parties.' That is, ultimately it is Catullus who is responsible for defining his relationship with Lesbia, and it is he who demands certain behaviour from her. He is the architect of his own suffering, though he does not perceive it, nor consciously present it in this way. Again in this chapter I focus my reading on Catullus the masochistic character, and thus I read the Lesbia poems as

Catullus' 'ideal reader'. I buy into the picture of Lesbia that Catullus creates as if it were genuine, and use this picture to expose it as a deluded fiction.

Moving through several of the later Lesbia poems, I examine the masochistic dynamic from both perspectives: the perspective that the Catullan character believes himself, and wants the reader to believe as well, and the outside perspective, which reveals that ultimately the powerless character is Lesbia herself. Poems 83 and 92 illustrate the understanding of Lesbia that Catullus thinks that he possesses, which is integral to his genuine belief elsewhere that he is Lesbia's victim. I conclude my examination with poem 76, in which Catullus begs the gods to remove his love for Lesbia from him. I see this poem as the epicentre of Catullus' expression of his masochistic characteristics. It is his perceived powerlessness that causes him to ask for someone else to take his love from him, rather than doing it himself; secondly, he will not do it himself because he does not want to. Catullus has structured their relationship in such a way that he has perpetuated his own suffering. The failed concept of *foedus* in 76 illustrates the lack of equality between Catullus and Lesbia. While Catullus believes that the power is held by Lesbia, it is really he himself who holds all the power.

This reading of Catullus proposes that Catullus' masochistic desire for suffering is at the root of his relationship with Lesbia. It reveals that Catullus does not embody the notion of *pietas* as successfully as he perceives that he does, because he manipulates and uses Lesbia for his own gain – that is, for his own suffering. Though this is done unconsciously, Catullus' victimisation of Lesbia nevertheless occurs. For as long as Catullus needs to suffer, Lesbia must embody the role of the wrongdoer in his mind, and he must portray her as such. This reading takes the notion of *servitium*

amoris a step further: not only is Catullus emotionally enslaved to Lesbia, but he feels wretched in that suffering, even as he unconsciously perpetuates it.

Finally, I return to *Thyestes*. This final Senecan chapter thus serves as a litmus test for what the section as a whole illustrates: how masochism can coalesce with unreliable narration, through the way in which the character's masochistic persona skews their perception of the world. For example, Justine's narrative is heavily coloured by her religious masochism. The sadists' perspective comes through via Justine reporting their direct speech, and is often quite removed from the opinions that Justine herself expresses. Similarly, much of what we understand about Trimalchio and his guests is revealed through their direct speech; Encolpius' observations are often incorrect or misguided. Here narration works differently, which serves to highlight the difference between a diegetic masochistic narrator, and a masochistic character within a mimetic narrative. Chatman (1990, 117 ff.) acknowledges that mimetic forms do possess narrativity, broadly; building on this, Nünning and Sommer (2008, 339) point out that 'diegetic narrativity foregrounds the act of narration… Mimetic narrativity foregrounds "the story frame" rather than "the telling frame". This is an important point in reading Thyestes as a masochistic character: because we encounter him as part of the 'story frame', it is easier to separate his words from the rest of the story, and to find his version wanting.

Thyestes' masochistic delusion, which compels him to labour under the disguise of a pseudo-Stoic, has the potential to mislead, were it not for the information we already know about him from Atreus, the words of the Fury in the prologue, which set the course for the development of the drama, the speech of Thyestes himself at times, which betrays his anti-Stoic sentiments, and the comparatively more compelling stage presence of Atreus, which draws the reader into

his projected sense of the success of his plan, and thus the inevitable outcome that Thyestes will abandon his Stoic life of virtue in nature, and return home to Atreus.

This chapter is thus structured in a way that focuses firstly on the way that Thyestes' masochism is thwarted in any attempt to influence the narrative. After discussing the presence of narrativity in drama, I examine the metatheatrical elements of the play, specifically the way that Atreus takes on a quasi-authorial or stage manager role (Schiesaro 2003, 49). Atreus' control and consistency are key to the command he has over the unfolding story. Though the action of the play has been foretold by the Fury, it is as though Atreus assumes his identity, and Thyestes is inextricably consumed by his destiny. The consistency of Atreus' behaviour once again invokes comparison between Atreus and the Sadean sadists, who similarly are more trustworthy and reliable characters than Justine.

I then examine the masochistic motivation for Thyestes' pseudo-Stoicism, and how his veneer of Stoic virtue is an attempt to quell his paranoia about returning to Atreus. I adopt Loewenstein's theory on the intersection of passivity and anxiety in the masochistic persona (1995, 35-61), and analyse Thyestes' conversation with Tantalus in light of this. Thyestes' decision to cede control to Tantalus illustrates his masochistic passivity, akin to what we have seen with Justine and Encolpius, and ultimately it is this passivity that causes Thyestes' downfall, and marks him as an untrustworthy character, though not one powerful enough to be an unreliable narrator. The eventual consequence of this masochistic reading of Thyestes is to bring greater understanding of Thyestes' motivation, and to make clear why Atreus is the more compelling and trustworthy character.

This thesis shows the utility and adaptability of the masochistic persona as a literary device. As I illustrate, though the personality and situation of the masochist

can widely vary, their masochistic qualities will manifest predictably, and with points of commonality. Reading through my three central tropes of control, choice, and responsibility clearly shows these points of commonality, and illustrates that they can manifest irrespective of genre. These masochistic characters are useful literary devices, prolonging a narrative – as in the case of Justine, Encolpius, or Catullus – or enabling a narrative, as is the case with Thyestes. Just as these characters influence the development of the plot, so too do they impact on the way that information is passed onto the reader, and thus the way that the reader perceives the development of the plot. The generic transmission of the narrative can vary – diegetic, poetic, or mimetic – but the masochistic presence will still be felt to varying degrees. This thesis shows that understanding the influence of masochism over the narrative brings a new perspective in understanding complex texts, and offers new avenues of textual interpretation.

Justine: religion and the masochistic cycle

The Marquis de Sade explicates the construction of a libertine philosophy in his novel *Justine*. Though Justine is the title character, it is Sade's libertines who dominate the text, and whose philosophies are the more engaging and thought provoking, even as they are confronting. It is in the light of this libertine domination that Justine's masochistic persona can clearly be seen, as she struggles to assert herself against them in any way. The libertines represent and elucidate Sade's ideas on the subjectivity of vice and virtue, represented through the delineation between their sadism and Justine's very Catholic masochism (Pastoureau 1965, 49). Sade uses this dichotomy to show the subjectivity of notions of vice and virtue: the libertines in *Justine* take so much enjoyment from what Justine would call vice, that for them it is a virtue. Thus, they invert conventional moral perspective and use this conviction in their life of 'virtue' to maintain rigid control of their lifestyle and their circumstances. The libertines' propensity to ruminate on their actions before committing them, and then to savour them afterwards, is central to how they exert control over their victims. This reluctance to hurry through actions stands in stark contrast to Justine's behaviour; she shows little ability to anticipate what may happen to her, to dissimulate in order to shorten her tortures, or to exert any power to effect an escape. Thus, even when the libertines are physically inactive, they control the situation; likewise, as we shall see, even when they force Justine to take on the role of the aggressor, they maintain dominance. This clear demarcation between vice and virtue, sadism and masochism, means that Justine's masochistic characteristics are readily identifiable, making her a useful prototype case for the behaviours this section explores.

It is this prototype case for which I primarily use *Justine*. This thesis' primary goal is not to undertake an in-depth analysis of the Sadean oeuvre, but rather to use it as an explicit tool to draw out what is implicit in the classical texts. This means that my reading is principally concerned with extracting the central themes and ideas that direct my reading, as against furthering the complex scholarship around *Justine* itself. For this chapter, I engage with *Justine* as Sade's ideal reader, who accepts his sadistic colouring of his libertines and his masochistic colouring of Justine. As I approach the layers of narration in *Justine* in the second section of this thesis, I will engage further with the idea of the ideal reader, the implied reader and the implied author, in order to outline the myriad of readings that one can take away from this text. For the moment, however, *Justine* serves as a useful reading of the mechanics of masochism, and is thus read in light of that.

Justine follows the title character through a series of harrowing misadventures. Going under the pseudonym Thérèse, Justine finds herself continuously at the mercy of various libertines, who attempt to persuade her of the 'virtue' of their libertine philosophy.[13] Though the novel moves as a picaresque text, it is simultaneously cyclical:[14] Justine is unable to adapt her behaviour or her viewpoint; she experiences the same tortuous acts and engages in unchanged conversations, her perspective

[13] It is a common feature in *Justine* for all the people who torment and abuse Justine to share their motivations with her. Klossowski (1965) argues this stems from an innate feeling of guilt that causes the libertine to feel compelled to rationalise their actions. Henaff (1999, 70) postulates that speaking of their motivations adds another layer of pleasure, thereby increasing the intensity of their eventual sexual pleasure. I prefer the latter idea: narration both before and during sexual scenes is a common feature in *Philosophy in the Boudoir* and *120 Days of Sodom*, and arguably is a feature of Sade's hyperbolised sexual pleasure. Arguably, the increased need for justification that Klossowski terms as 'guilt' could be Sade's own need to rationalise his philosophies and make his contemporaries accept them. De Beauvoir (1953, 69) contends one of the reasons for Sade's fluctuating and at times manic need to explain his philosophies was his desperation to see society appreciate and even follow his philosophies.

[14] Henaff (1999, 140) argues that 'Sadean time… is totally flat and unresonant… This is why the Sadean narrative… is not truly picaresque.' Similarly, Miller (1976, 226) points out that: 'what Justine as narrator registered as chronology was in fact stasis and progression repetition.' That is, while Justine may regularly move location, and appear to travel large distances between each captor, the central narrative – her movement, her capture, her abuse, her unchanged persona – plays on a continual loop.

entirely immovable (Giraud 1965, 41-42). These conversations between the staunchly Catholic Justine and the libertines allow Sade to explicate fully the philosophy of libertinage;[15] to aggressively propound the fundamental objection libertines have to what they perceive as the pervasive influence of Catholicism within France; and to juxtapose the success of his libertines against the misery of the hapless Justine (Miller 1976, 221). Sade posits that perception is arbitrary; he challenges the reader to adjust their perspective and to recognise that societal rules are simply inculcated doctrines designed to repress individuality and create a 'pseudo-nature' (Harari 1973, 1212).[16] His sadists have complete awareness of their own desires. They identify precisely what they want and then calculate the most efficient and pleasurable way to achieve this. They eschew conventional systems of morality, such as Catholicism, and instead define their own philosophy and moral code by reference to their own needs (Henaff 1999, 281).

Another point critical to the success of the libertines is isolation. Many of the libertines Justine encounters live a secluded existence, away from general society. This limits possible intrusion and disorder while maximising opportunities for libertinism: every action is aimed towards obtaining the utmost pleasure, and a contained environment both enables this and reduces any potential threat (Barthes

[15] Cusset, Sollers & Celestin (1998) provide useful discussion on the influence of the French Revolution on libertinage, and the idea of liberty within libertinage. Eighteenth century libertinism was concerned with freedom of bodily and intellectual expression; the paradox being that this kind of freedom was not available to many, and only benefited a restricted number of people. We see this manifest in Sade as the free expression by his libertines of their libertinism, which causes a forced submission by the victims – i.e., Justine – of their 'freedom'. As Kavanagh (1998, 99) argues, Sade's 'works chronicle a profound redefinition of both the private and the public in relation to the challenge of sexuality.' This obliteration of the demarcation between public and private is not as profound in *Justine*, because of the seclusion of libertine existence, which is something I will return to later when discussing the Sadean fortress.

[16] Harari articulates Sade's argument in this way: 'Man is the helpless beneficiary of the whole constellation of formative means at a culture's disposal: God, a religion, laws, institutions brought to bear upon him with a view to inculcating moral principles, a conscience, a preordained philosophical system and a "pseudo-nature," one which culture tries to persuade us is genuine, but, in which desire is actually stifled.' Justine is an obvious product of this kind of environment, and she has clearly been fully persuaded of it. Sade's sadists, on the other hand, have complete awareness of their own desires, and similarly are aware that their proclivities fall outside of this 'pseudo nature'.

1976, 16). It also makes clear the anti-Catholic existence that Sade seeks to exploit: each libertine sanctuary is its own fully-functioning microcosm, that has no use for church and state. Arguably the most successful example of this is the Sadean fortress at Silling in *Les Cent Vingt Journées de Sodome*, as described by the Duc de Blangis:

> You are now outside of France, deep within an impenetrable forest, past rugged mountains, the paths of which have been destroyed soon after you came through them. You are imprisoned within an impenetrable citadel; nobody knows where you are; you are removed from all your friends, your parents, you are already dead to the world, and it is for nothing more than our pleasures that you live. (249-250)[17]

This 'ultimate Sadean *lieu clos*', as DeJean (1984, 281) describes it, ensures the safety of the libertines and gives them complete control over their environment (Frappier-Mazur 1998, 187).[18] They are able to structure their entire existence around this one specific task, ensuring their unrelenting autocracy. Within this enclosure, everything is allocated to categories (food, colours, clothing),[19] which forms the basis of 'a diagrammatic relationship' (Barthes 1976, 153), upon which the social autarchy is founded and maintained.[20] This detailed classification system provides clarity and

[17] All translations of *120 Days* are adapted from Seaver & Wainhouse's editions of the texts. Translations of *Justine* come from John Phillips' 2012 translation.
[18] See Deininger (2013, 1-14) for further discussion of the structure of *120 Days*, particularly in terms of how the structure and architecture of the château mirrors the desires of the libertines themselves.
[19] For example, the four libertines give their victims different coloured ribbons, which then signify to which libertine the victim belongs. See Barthes (1976, 17-21) for a detailed examination of the signs and functions of the Sadean community.
[20] Barthes (1976, 17) notes: 'The enclosure of the Sadian site has another function: it forms the basis of a social autarchy. Once shut in, the libertines, their assistants, and their subjects form a total society, endowed within an economy, a morality, a language, and a time articulated into schedules, labours, and celebrations.'

logic to the libertine, and removes ambiguity, which by its very nature creates anxiety and doubt. Confusion in Sade is a trait that belongs only to masochists: Justine becomes confused because of her inability to understand the libertines, and her lack of perception beyond her own virtues.[21] This is something that we will examine in analysing the masochistic traits of both Encolpius and Thyestes, who similarly lack the interpretative abilities to understand what is happening around them.

Before descending more fully into an examination of Sade's characterisation of Justine, it is useful to canvass briefly the cultural and socio-political background to *Justine*, as this has bearing on the way in which *Justine* plays out, particularly Justine's stubborn refusal to change or adapt to her surroundings. *Justine* is a transgressive text, and through it Sade reflects anger, violence, and the macabre, qualities which are identifiable with the transitional years in France between Robespierre and Napoleon, in which the second *Justine* was published (Brown 2002, 21). These qualities arose because of the state of confusion and uncertainty, in a country that was no longer a monarchy, not yet an empire, and arguably neither a Republic (Dipiero 1994, 251).[22] Sade channels increasing social tensions in the wake of the Revolution by making many of the dissolute characters whom Justine

[21] Henaff (1999, 47) describes this experience as, 'Because she understands that heaven and signs are being emptied out in tandem, Justine clings to signs so as not to lose heaven. The greater the emptiness, and the clearer it is that nothing *means* anything, the more she sets her will to demanding explanations, using them to replenish the phantom signs and stanch this haemorrhage of meaning…' That is, Justine uses these lengthy conversations with the libertines to try and remind her of her own virtues, rather than to actually listen to what the libertines have to say. I will explore this idea more thoroughly when examining Justine's interactions with the libertine Clément.

[22] Dipiero discusses the translation of social upheaval into a novel paradigm: 'By constituting the female protagonist as the figure of social disruption in a narrative that contested the formal convention of aristocratic fiction, novelists provided prose fiction the means for negotiating new and complex social configurations, and translated class conflict into gender terms.' This is certainly what Sade attempts to do, though not with great success. In the second chapter I will examine Sade's own theories on what makes a good novel, set out in his essay *Idées sur les romans*, where Sade examines the development of the novel through time, and lists what he thinks are the particularly successful elements of a novel. Seeing virtue being trampled on by vice, and challenging society to hold a mirror to itself are two of the things Sade attempts to reproduce in *Justine*, and which, we will see, do not work that successfully. However, in Sade's defence, Bataille (1986, 178) does comment that: 'He [de Sade] was less concerned to convince than to challenge.'

encounters of aristocratic stock, or at least men of power.[23] Sade's libertines are the epitome of vice: they delight in violence and sadism in a way that invokes the bloodlust of the Terror and its consequences. The masochism of Justine reflects the vestiges of French virtue, as elements of society attempted to assuage social tensions through the reestablishment of familial virtues and a 'definable civil society' (Brown 2002, 21). By channelling or invoking these societal ideas, Sade illustrates the polarisation in his contemporary society, through the opposition of vice and virtue, the libertines and Justine, and sadism and masochism (Pastoureau 1965, 49).

This chapter will focus on the way that Justine interacts with the libertines, and how this interaction clearly shows her masochistic nature. Justine illustrates the three masochistic behavioural tropes that have so far been identified: control, choice and responsibility. Primarily, these behaviours manifest through the practice of, and discussion of, her religion, which is why her interactions with the sadists illuminate both the sadistic and masochistic character. Though much of *Justine* is spent narrating the physical tortures that are visited upon Justine, predominantly the superiority and dominance of the libertines is shown through their speech, which is then realised through physical action.

Harari (1984, 1057) describes this progression from speech to action as a series of 'methodological recipes for *jouissance*'. *Jouissance* is a difficult word to

[23] Forrest (1995, 91) writes that the aristocracy found 'little to attract them to the new social norms… from the very outset they were identified with *ancien regime* privilege and regarded as potential enemies of reform.' On the subject of Sade's relationship with powerful men who abuse their power, Phillips (2001, 94) discusses Sade's purpose in writing *Justine: 'Justine* was originally conceived as a satire, attacking the corruption of contemporary institutions, including the judiciary, banking, the bourgeois-dominated world of finances in general and, above all, the Catholic Church…' The powerful positions that the libertines hold enables them to wield the incredible power that they do. As Barthes (1976, 130-131) points out, 'the libertines belong to the aristocracy, or more exactly (and more frequently) to the class of financiers, professionals, and prevaricators, in short: the exploiters… Sade uses them differently, not as an image to be portrayed, but as a model to be reproduced. Where? In the libertine's small society; this society is constructed like a model, a miniature; Sade transports class division into it; on one side, the exploiters… on the other, the ordinary people.' This also supports the point I made earlier, concerning the way that the libertines exclude themselves from society, so that they may protect their society.

reproduce precisely in English,[24] but within Sade it essentially denotes a state of intense metaphysical pleasure, which a libertine can obtain by elaborate discourse on how and why they feel pleasure from a particular act, *before* they experience the act itself and obtain greater physical pleasure.[25] Indeed, sexual pleasure may only be a secondary consequence of cerebral pleasure, 'an after-effect, a concrete indication that the libertine has mastered the "science" of *jouissance*'(Harari 1984, 1060). *Jouissance* is used to separate the libertines from a mainstream existence, and to instead live for their own pleasures and purpose. Exploring the process by which the libertines achieve *jouissance*, and how Justine perceives their actions, illustrates why Justine could never successfully persuade the libertines away from their philosophy, and why, in turn, her inability to recognise their intractability exposes her masochistic persona.

Justine, as masochist, is indicative of what Sade perceives as blind faith to an imposed system of philosophical beliefs, which are stubbornly upheld not only by Justine but by Sade's general public (Harari 1973, 1214). Justine's masochism represents complete subservience to one particular ideology, and a complete inability to adapt to a new regime in order to better one's fortunes. Justine's masochism is inescapable. She is so subsumed with her faith, and her belief, because of her faith, that she is a superior and better person than all the libertines she encounters, means that she is powerless to escape her situation. Sade's libertines attempt to persuade Justine that they are right and she is wrong, and are often convincing in their

[24] Gallop (2012, 566), discusses Barthes' interpretation of *jouissance* in *Le plaisir du texte*, arguing that while the simpler concept of *plaisir* denotes 'comfortable, ego-assuring, recognised, and legitimated as culture', *jouissance* is 'shocking, ego-disruptive, and in conflict with the canons of culture'. The last point is particularly relevant to how Sade engages with *jouissance* in his texts, particularly *Justine, Juliette,* and *Les cent vingt jours*. For further discussion of the concept of *jouissance* more generally, see Gallop (1984), 110-115.

[25] As an example of this, Fradinger (2005, 51) comments, in relation to *120 Days*: 'The libertines gather for the pleasure of hearing – a most precious pleasure for the ear is the organ that communicates "les impressions plus vives"... Only after listening do the libertines act.'

arguments; however, regardless of how persuasive their ideology might seem to be, Justine is unswayed. Sadean scholarship frequently discusses the timelessness of Justine, how she seems to be trapped in this cycle of abuse for years and years, yet nothing seems to change from first page to last (Miller 1976, 222-223).[26] Sade marries her inability to change her viewpoint with her body's inability to change: these acts of abuse are constantly repeated on Justine's indestructible body, which never fails her, despite the many tortures visited upon her (Dipiero 1994, 249).[27]

Justine's need to constantly spar with the libertines on a philosophical level is what frequently causes her undoing, and perpetuates her suffering. Justine is really the only victim in any of Sade's texts to have a voice; the rest are really set pieces, voiceless and present only to fulfil the needs of the libertines (Harari 1984, 1049). She uses that voice to try to persuade them that there is a better way of life, despite the fact that the libertines make clear to her how much they enjoy their life. Despite how many times she attempts this with libertine after libertine, she cannot stop herself from doing it each time. This is an instance of issues with both masochistic control and masochistic choice: Justine cannot control her need to try to convert the libertines; she cannot learn what has gone awry before and control this urge. She continually makes the same choices, and continually experiences the same outcome (Miller 1976, 222).

Justine regularly ignores any alternative course of action to that which she deems to be 'right'. In this way, she is not only wilfully blind to the choices that she actively makes, but she refuses to take any responsibility for her own situation. While

[26] Likewise here we can recall Henaff's point (1999, 140) that 'Sadean time… is totally flat and unresonant: absolutely nonlyric. The narrative has no memory of its sequences, events, or actors.' Delers (2010, 658) also refers to reading *Justine* as a 'strange circular reading experience'.

[27] Dipiero writes, 'Justine receives the marks of libertine activity, but almost as quickly allows all trace of them to deliquesce.' This is, of course, a necessary paradox; Justine is simultaneously the victim and the protagonist, and without her longevity the text could not continue.

often the way that Justine is ensnared by these libertines is pure bad luck, often she ensures that continuation of her suffering by making certain choices once she has been captured. Her need to engage philosophically with the libertines is one such choice, as is her refusal to engage and really to anything that they have to say. Finally, her refusal to make any choice other than that determined by her religious precepts often stymies any opportunity she has to escape her torment. To examine this wilful self-blindness further, I am going to explore two episodes of *Justine*, the episode in the monastery of St Mary-in-the-Wood, and Justine's encounter with the libertine Roland.

In the monastery episode of *Justine*, Sade broaches the topic of the subjectivity of vice and virtue, and how a particular idea that is condemned by a Catholic can be exulted by a libertine, and vice versa. The episode begins when Justine seeks solace in the monastery St Mary-in-the-Wood after she has escaped the monstrous surgeon, Rodin. Expecting to find relief from her torments, instead Justine discovers that the monastery is run by a group of libertine monks, who kidnap and imprison young women to serve their every desire.[28] After being forced into a series of orgies, Justine converses with the libertine Clément, and he takes the opportunity to chastise her religious beliefs and prejudices:

> To like what others like demonstrates conformity in the organs, but nothing in favour of the beloved object. Three-quarters of the world can find the smell of the rose delicious without this being a reason either to condemn that quarter who may find it

[28] Carter (1979, 42) describes the monastery as '… a microcosm in which a small group of privileged men operate a system of government by terror upon a seraglio of kidnapped women.' This is reminiscent of Barthes' point (1976, 131) that Sadean society is like a miniature, into which a class system is transposed.

> smells bad, or to show that this smell is truly agreeable. Therefore, if there exists beings in this world whose tastes shock all accepted standards, not only should we not be astonished by them, but we should serve their interests, make them happy, abolish all restraints upon them, and if we wish to be just, provide them with every means to satisfy themselves without risk, because it was no more their choice to have strange tastes than it was yours to be witty or stupid, to have a fine figure or to be a hunchback. (136)

Sade argues that nature overrides everything, and is ultimately determinative of all behaviour; as Harari (1973, 1214) argues: 'According to de Sade… instead of seeing the norm for what it truly is – an arbitrary fiction – we ascribe to it the status of absolute reality and adhere to it blindly.' Strong individuals – such as Sade's libertines – embrace their nature; they do not conform to expected prejudices, for that is the role of the weak, who are unable to recognise that they are constricted, overpowered and diminished by societal design (Adorno & Horkheimer 1986, 100).[29]

Clément argues that because Justine is Catholic she subscribes to a particular set of ideals, which label certain acts as virtuous, and certain acts as vicious. However, he subscribes to a libertine philosophy, and therefore particular acts are labelled differently (Bataille 1986, 179). Since self-satisfaction and pleasurable experiences are paramount to a libertine, they can adapt their behaviour or play a role that goes against their nature in order to further their pleasure. Indeed, Clement had played the role of a good-natured priest in order to lure Justine into the monastery.

[29] Adorno & Horkheimer observe: 'Unlike the weak, the strong individual never adopts another persona; he merely expresses in action what he has received from nature.' That is, Sade's libertines do not feel compelled to behave in any way other than what they believe nature has intended for them.

Justine, on the other hand, is far more absolute and intractable in her beliefs, predominantly behaving as her religion has conditioned her to do (Gorer 1934, 120). Justine's refusal to stray from her beliefs, instead choosing to see herself entirely as the victim, ultimately only causes her further misery, rather than seeing her triumph. This is something that will be picked up in chapter three, in examining Catullus: Catullus' refusal to compromise his all-consuming love for Lesbia causes him misery, causing Catullus to feel that he is her victim.

If we look more closely at the discussion between Justine and Clément, her inability to comprehend his argument, and her inability to mount a convincing counter-argument, reveals her masochistic persona. Following Clément's exposition on acting as nature intends, Justine responds: "these doctrines are horrendous, Father, they can only lead to a taste for cruelty and horror" (141), illustrating her black and white, Catholic view of right and wrong. Clément counters, *inter alia*, "If Nature were offended by these tastes it would not inspire them in us" (141), which is a central tenet of the libertine philosophy in *Justine*. Justine responds:

> Obviously, if you are the stronger one and if your atrocious principles of cruelty drive you to seek pleasure in pain alone, with a view to increasing your sensations, you will imperceptibly succeed in inflicting pain on the object that serves you to a degree of violence capable of taking her life. (142)

This statement shows a degree of insight, and highlights a pervasive problem in the libertine system, which is libertine apathy. Frappier-Mazur (1998, 184) describes this

as the libertine association of sex and terror: 'adducing the jaded sensitivity of the libertines, who must resort to ever crueller inventions in order to arouse themselves.' The (il)logical consequence of this, which Justine partially touches on here, is that this desire to avoid apathy, and to be continually aroused, is not limitless; at some point the libertine, if he does not run out of imagination, will run out of potential victims. What Justine does not grasp here, however, is that her point would trouble Clément, who simply replies, "So be it", and continues on to discuss further how he is simply doing what Nature intended him to do. "The doctrine of loving one's neighbour is a fantasy that we owe to Christianity and not to Nature", Clément states, "He is no longer afraid to make everything serve him, to possess all that surrounds him, and, whatever the cost of his pleasures to others, he indulges them without thinking and without remorse. " (142). From this point on, Justine's attempt to engage Clément in a reasoned discussion about the 'depravity of his tastes' (134) really falls away. Her counterpoints are reduced to basic aphorisms: "But the man you describe is a monster" (142); "Oh, you can say what you like, Father, but I shall never accept such destructive lusts" (143); and "You make me tremble" (143).

This is an all too familiar pattern for Justine; her inability to duel verbally with the libertines is because of her inherently passive persona, and, more centrally perhaps, because she was never receptive to begin with. Her words above – "say what you will, I shall never accept this" – are telling. While Justine may listen, she does not comprehend. Her views are set, in much the same way as the libertines' own views are, but they have the luxury of being safe and secure in their views. There is no advantage to the libertines in adapting or changing. Justine's immovability secures

her ongoing captivity, and her repetitive misfortunes.[30] Justine continually makes the choice not to listen, not to truly engage, but rather just to use her religion as some sort of impenetrable shield; Justine sees her religious beliefs as a protection, something that assures her virtue and defends her from the philosophies of the libertines:

> Whatever the circumstances of my life, the sentiments of religion had never left me. Despising the vain sophisms of the strong-minded, believing them all to come from libertinism much more than from any firm conviction, I preferred to follow my conscience and my heart, finding in both all necessary responses to them. (97)

This quotation illustrates Justine's difficulties. Grayson (1990, 91) argues that: 'Justine invites abusive treatment because she repudiates Sade's utopia'; to me, it is the step before this that means that Justine invites abuse: she will not even comprehend it, and thus repudiates without regard to the libertine utopia at all. Before she begins to even hear what they have to say, she has consciously decided not to listen. Her passivity extends to not even actively listening, but instead trying to make "stout reply" through religious dogma alone. To elide this with Henaff's point that 'the libertine is ineducable', Justine is as uneducable and incorrigible as the libertines with whom she ineffectually spars.

[30] Henaff (1999, 278) points out the similarity in the stubbornness of Justine and the libertines: 'The libertine is uneducable – incorrigible, if you will… He moves within a secure destiny… His adversary has lost to him from the beginning – and, reciprocally, Justine is always shown, beforehand, losing to the libertine; she remains as immutable as he does.'

This also prevents her from exerting any kind of proactivity, because she cannot manipulate her way out of her difficulties. Rather than considering if she could take action herself to change her circumstances, and stop the endless cycle of being trapped and tortured by the libertines, Justine takes solace in her religious beliefs, and waits for someone likeminded to take pity on her, demonstrating masochistic passivity. Justine makes no attempt to change her behaviour in order to change her situation, and thus this illustrates both her passivity and her refusal to take responsibility for her situation. She denies responsibility because she cannot see that her choices have compounded her situation; she cannot appreciate that because she made a decision to be intractable and obstinate, that she has sealed her fate as a victim.

Justine escapes one situation and flees to another, expecting that she will find somebody who is willing to come to her rescue, but always finding another torturer (Carpenter 1996, 47). She does not expect this to happen, and yet is not surprised when it does; she accepts servility because that is what her virtue bids her to do, and then later seizes an opportunity to escape, only to wander fruitlessly into consistently similar situations. Barthes (1976, 143) suggests that if a Sadean victim, such as Justine, were to embrace pleasure instead of feeling only pain, then their victimisation would cease and they would become a libertine: 'The scream is the victim's mark. She makes herself a victim because she chooses to scream. If, under the same vexation, she were to ejaculate, she would cease to be a victim, would be transformed into a libertine: to scream/to discharge, this paradigm is the beginning of choice, i.e., Sadian meaning.'

This is to a degree certainly true, though the vocalisation must be genuine, and must come with acceptance and ownership of the action. Justine, for example, will

mimic sexual pleasure where she believes it will be of assistance to her, such as when she is trapped in the monastery in St Mary's Wood (Carter 1979, 49). However, this is only mimicry; she assures – or convinces – herself that she feels nothing; her virtue is not abrogated and so the transformation is not genuine. This is one of the central differences between Justine and her sister Juliette, who does transform into a libertine, and consequently has the far more successful experience (Rodmell 1990, 100).[31]

Justine constantly expects people to behave according to her precepts, and is consistently disappointed when this does not occur. This is clearly exemplified in Justine's interaction with the libertine Roland, an episode that begins after Justine saves Roland from a roadside beating, only to be enslaved by him. Justine feels, given that she saved Roland's life, he should show her mercy. Roland's reply illustrates that he subscribes to the same kind of libertine philosophy that, by this time, Justine has heard many times before:

> What were you doing when you came to my assistance? Given the option of going on your way and that of accompanying me, did you not choose the latter on an impulse straight from the heart? In other words, you gave in to a movement of pleasure, didn't you? What the devil gives you the right to think that I am obliged to reward you for the pleasures you allow yourself? …Instead of being a vice, ingratitude is therefore the virtue of the proud, just as gratitude is therefore the virtue of the proud, just as gratitude is just as surely the virtue of the weak alone.

[31] Miller (1976, 217) comments that: 'Juliette's function is crucial to the structure of the novel; not merely as the dark-haired vicious foil to Justine's blond virtue, but as a point of narrative suture… Juliette's dizzying rise, the author informs us, begins with the successive and successful exchange of her "pristine fruits." Hyperbolic courtesan, she sleeps her way to the top.'

> Let people do me favours as much as they want if they enjoy doing so, but they should expect nothing from me. (196-197)

There is a precision shown here in how Roland understands the decision-making process: that one should base a decision on the potential risk it carries, and the amount of pleasure it will bring. If a decision holds no risk and will bring pleasure, it is rational; if it poses substantial risk and little pleasure, it is irrational (Bataille 1986, 175).[32] Thus, Roland believes that Justine chose to rescue him because it would bring her pleasure, given that it marries with her Catholic morals, and thus he is under no obligation to be grateful to her, as she has already experienced a pleasurable outcome through the act itself. Here Roland points out to Justine the masochistic issue of control: Justine saves him because she is compelled to do so; she has no self-control to do otherwise. Her masochistic nature compels her to do what her religion requires of her, and she was powerless to do otherwise. This is important to bear in mind as we move further into the Roland episode.

Roland then not only uses Justine as a slave in his counterfeiting business, but also as a sexual slave, forcing her to engage in elaborate games of sexual asphyxia. It is through these various strangulation-based games that Roland solidifies his status as the sovereign man (Foucault 1998, 149),[33] and simultaneously justifies it by showing that his philosophy makes more sense for his own personal welfare than Justine's does for her. Roland demonstrates certain intuitional abilities, which enables him to

[32] As Bataille states: '…de Sade starts from an attitude of utter irresponsibility and ends with one of stringent self-control.'

[33] Foucault comments that: 'in Sade, sex is without any norm of intrinsic rule that might be formulated from its own nature; but it is subject to the unrestricted law of a power which itself knows no other law but its own… a unique and naked sovereignty: an unlimited right of all-powerful monstrosity.' Likewise Blanchot (2004, 220-221) argues that Sade's morality 'is founded on absolute solitude… we are born alone, there are no links between one man and another. The only rule of conduct is that I prefer those things which affect me pleasurably and set at nought the undesirable effects of my preferences on other people.' It matters not to Roland whether Justine lives or dies, and he does not expect her to care whether he lives or dies either.

anticipate and predict Justine's actions and thereby adjust his own behaviour accordingly, showing a foresight and comprehension that Justine herself is incapable of exercising. Roland is so aware of Justine's Catholic proclivities that he is able to foresee her behaviour to such an extent that he can willingly put his life in her hands:

> "You will do everything to me that I have done to you. I shall strip myself naked, I shall climb onto the stool, you will tie the rope around me, I shall excite myself for a moment, then as soon as you see me getting hard, you will pull the stool away, and I shall be left having. You will leave me there until you see either the emission of my semen or symptoms of pain. In the latter case, you will immediately cut me loose. In the former case, you will let Nature take its course, and you will not cut me down until afterwards. So you see, Thérèse, I am placing my life in your hands, and your freedom and fortune will be the reward for your good conduct." (213-214)

Here Roland promises to gift Justine her freedom, should she assist him, and ensure that he is unharmed.[34] Justine precisely follows Roland's instructions, and he experiences an unparalleled pleasure from their experiment (Klossowski 1987, 71).[35] Afterwards, Roland continues to keep Justine imprisoned, reneging on his offer of

[34] It is noteworthy that in this instance Roland is not expressly admitting Justine's worth, because ultimately he is ambivalent whether he lives or dies, believing that the sexual experience will trump any unfortunate consequences, even death. This is another instance of libertine apathy. Beauvoir (1953, 76) posits that libertine apathy allows the libertine to dominate any situation, whether they perform a dominant or submissive role, because '…the thing that counts is the subject's intention.' That is why something that was shameful and tortuous for Justine is joyous and pleasurable for Roland.

[35] Klossowski discusses this reversal of libertine and victim, arguing 'it is precisely the exercise of this *right to conduct forbidden experiments* which, born from the libertine conscience, will form one of the fundamental commitments of the Sadean conscience.'

freedom. This episode reveals several critical things about the psyche of the Sadean libertine compared with Justine: firstly, the power of Roland's intuitive intellect is fully displayed; secondly, Justine's masochism is clearly illustrated; finally, the psychological prowess generally of the libertine philosophy can clearly be seen.

In examining Justine's behaviour in this passage, it is useful to turn briefly to a discussion of the theory of religion and masochism. Self-sacrifice and self-abasement are often linked to religious masochism (Charme 1983, 223). As Reik (1962, 78) points out: 'This is the ethno-psychological analogy to the infantile idea: father beats me and loves me.' That is, the notion that God is making the individual suffer out of some greater love overrides any more immediate instincts for self-preservation. Charme (1983, 225) notes that moral masochism plays a role in the decision-making process: 'Moral masochism is primarily a defence against a powerful unconscious sense of guilt… Punishment or sacrifice is much easier to accept than unrelieved guilt.' Taking these points together illuminates Justine's actions and decisions in this episode. As Carter (1979, 39) observes: 'There is no mysterious virtue in Justine's suffering… She is a gratuitous victim.' In this situation, Justine can be nothing but the gratuitous victim: she must save Roland to avoid the guilt she would feel if she did not save him. It comes back to the same principles that Roland mentioned to Justine when they first met: saving him is an impulse dictated by her heart.

Indeed, the thought of letting Roland die never really occurs to Justine; instead, she worries that she will be committing a sin by letting him hang to begin with, but reasons that "it seemed to me that the evil I would do would immediately be compensated for by the extreme care I would take to preserve his life" (214). I return here to the point that I introduced at the start of this episode, that Justine is compelled to help Roland because it is what her religion demands that she does. She surrenders

control to the tenets of her religion, rather than thinking of what would actually be best for her. She makes a choice to save him, a choice that will only further her suffering. Finally, of course, she denies responsibility for what she does, because it is what her religion bids her to do, and therefore she feels that she had no choice but to do it. Justine wilfully ignores what is arguably the logical solution, because for Justine her religious masochism overpowers her desire to end her suffering; she must suffer, because she must do what she deems to be right (Jolivet 2011, 584).

Roland's success here depended on utilising his cerebral nature to anticipate that this is exactly how Justine would behave. He weighed up her desire to escape against her overriding Christian virtue, and knew that she would cut him down, regardless of how desperate she was to escape (Carter 1979, 45).[36] Roland demonstrates his dominance in this situation because he is physically helpless. He has no physical control over how events will unfold, yet exerts an unrelenting psychological control that leads to complete success. He even turns the situation into further punishment for Justine, when it could have been her opportunity to finally win her freedom. As Carter (1978, 53-54) states: '[the reader] is bound to urge the spotless Justine, just this once, to soil her hands with crime.' However, there are a number of reasons why this cannot happen. As we know, Justine has wrapped herself up in her religion, in order to shut out any effect the libertines' words might have. In doing so, she has shut herself off from being able to use their words against them. In this state of passivity, she is reactive; thus, when Roland commands that she cut him down, she is powerless to do otherwise, because her Christian belief in the sanctity of life is all that guides her. She cannot put her life, or the lives of the other women held captive

[36] Gurtwirth (1992, 215) describes it as Justine's 'ironic acquiescence to her fate…' It is an example of the behaviour we see repeatedly through the text, where Justine's masochism prompts her to make choices that are overwhelmingly detrimental to her, but in line with her religious beliefs.

by Roland, before her sense of duty. She must once again resort to pleading with Roland for her release, despite having fruitlessly covered this ground numerous times before.

Thus, the primary characteristics of a Sadean sadist are all geared towards maintaining and furthering their pleasure: they are aware, focused and intuitive, intellectually and verbally adept at manipulating and controlling people in order to achieve their aims (Bataille 1986, 171). Conversely, Justine is directionless; though she travels a vast area over the course of the novel, she learns nothing, and remains unchanged throughout the text (Giraud 1965, 42). Though she remains remarkably physically unharmed, considering the tortures visited upon her, this has little to do with Justine developing any skills to look after herself, but rather by taking an opportunity to escape that is usually caused by something external to her; for example, she escapes from Roland after he is arrested for counterfeiting whilst on a business trip (218). Justine is unwilling to compromise her Catholic virtues, and thus unwilling to alter her behaviour, meaning that she remains a passive victim awaiting assistance, rather than abrogating her religion, in order to be proactive and to extricate herself from her situation. She allows herself to be dominated and controlled by the libertines, because she has no intellectual or behavioural adaptability, and little awareness of her own desires, beyond behaving in accordance with Catholic precepts. No matter how many times she fails in trying to persuade the libertines of Catholic morality, she dutifully tries again and again, while using this morality as a shield to protect herself against their moral system. That is why libertines – like Roland – can take advantage of her, because they listen and adapt. They may not agree with Justine in any way, but they use her words to improve their understanding of her, which they can then use later to manipulate her into behaving just as they want her to. The critical

masochistic tendencies that we can extract from *Justine* are that she surrenders her agency in favour of her virtue, meaning that she can be controlled, and that when she is controlled she cannot adapt, which are both masochistic tendencies that we will pursue in examining Encolpius and Thyestes. Her inability to compromise a belief system or meaningfully alter her behaviour means that she is the constant victim, which we will see occurs with Catullus and the absolutism of his love for Lesbia.

Encolpius: the failure of the masochistic picaro

Encolpius' masochism manifests primarily through the kaleidoscopic range of emotions he experiences throughout the text. The more emotionally agitated he becomes, the easier it is for him to be controlled, and hence steered along from place to place. This kind of emotional manipulation is common in masochistic relationships: masochists may allow themselves to be manipulated or taken advantage of emotionally, and will be coaxed into particular actions without perhaps realising that this is occurring. Coupled with this is Encolpius' propensity for melodrama, and his tendency to overdramatise insignificant matters. As Fantham (1996, 164) observes: 'Encolpius… tries to imitate epic and tragic behaviour in his otherwise disreputable life and the conflict of values creates pure farce.' This chapter will identify these characteristics as marking Encolpius as a masochist: namely, his propensity for melodrama, his subsequent surrendering of agency, and the consequent state of passivity that he assumes. Encolpius' masochism is tied to a deliberate choice not to assert his agency. Though there are opportunities in the text for him to utilise his superior education and, theoretically, his intellect, he chooses not to do so, and in doing so ensures his own suffering. His victimisation may be brief, transient, or repetitive, but his choice not to enforce his agency always culminates in the same outcome. Examining Encolpius' relationship with Giton illustrates his melodramatic nature, and his tendency to be manipulated and, in turn, victimised. Giton engages with Encolpius' melodrama, and exhibits it himself, in order to maintain his control over Encolpius. Examining the dynamic between Giton and Encolpius in turn facilitates comparison between Eumolpus and Encolpius, which shows how Encolpius' masochistic traits make him ultimately a less successful picaro than Eumolpus. Finally, the Quartilla episode illustrates Encolpius' passive nature, and

thus how his masochism positions him as the antithesis of the ideal Roman man, and the victim of Quartilla.

Conte (1996, 5) styles Encolpius as a 'mythomaniac', arguing that he 'is never without a spurious pretence of drama, a misconceived tragicising of experience.' Encolpius needs and constantly wants attention, and when he is not getting that attention he will try to manufacture it, concocting a melodrama in his own mind, which can then spill out into his real life. For example, when Encolpius kills the "sacred goose" at Oenothea's, he compares himself to Hercules defeating the Stymphalian birds.[37] Encolpius feels threatened, after a "gang" of three geese show up, surround him and start pecking at him. Specifically, he notes that the 'leader and head of this savage assault' (*dux ac magister saevitiae*, 136) even managed to peck his leg, while the other two content themselves with undoing his shoes and pulling at his tunic. The imagery employed here by Encolpius illustrates the kind of inflated and disproportionate language that he utilises to describe a fairly banal situation:

> *Nec satiates defunctorio ictu, morte me anseris vindicavi:*
> *Tales Herculea Stymphalidas arte coactas*
> *ad caelum fugisse reor…* (136)

> Not sated by a mere cursory blow, I avenged myself by the death of the goose.
> Just as I imagine the Stymphalian birds fled into the sky,
> driven by Hercules' skill…

[37] McMahon (1998, 206) points out the particular irony of this heroic comparison: 'It is his search for a cure for his sexual failures which has brought him to this pathetic and laughable point, and yet he identifies himself as playing the role of the very paragon of virility.'

The language used here – *vindicavi,* for example – is more reminiscent of Encolpius defeating a group of men, rather than a hardened gang of street geese.[38] By doing this, Encolpius displaces himself from reality, and thus never feels responsibility for the situations that he finds himself in. If he styles himself as a mythical hero or victim, then he is either not responsible, because something has been done to him, or not responsible because he is acting heroically in order to save himself. Here, Encolpius has taken on the role of Hercules in order to, firstly, feel more powerful and manly than the situation warrants; and, secondly, when Oenothea reveals that the goose is '*Priapi delicias',* to excuse and justify the role that he played in the goose's death. This trope of avoidance of responsibility is central to the masochistic persona, being a part of the way that masochists separate themselves from culpability for their situation. Here we can recall the introductory discussion of masochism as a form of escape from responsibility and external pressure: as Baumeister (1988, 35-36) argues, masochists have a tendency to try and surrender control and self-awareness, and thus they can claim no responsibility for their actions.

A useful example of this comes when Giton, Ascyltus, and Encolpius part ways (80). Barchiesi (1999, 129) observes that the quarrel scene is made more exciting by the parodic allusions that it employs: 'elegy, tragedy, and historical *exampla* follow one another in an exhilarating series of debunking transformations.' Panayotakis (1995, 110-111) reads the lead-up to this scene as an inversion of the Theseus and Ariadne myth. On the way home from Trimalchio's – somewhat

[38] Encolpius' description of the geese as *tres anseres sacri* has caused debate among Petronian scholars, namely because Encolpius did not know at that point that they were sacred. Courtney (2001, 38) argues that this can be understood by 'Petronius' manipulation of first-person narrative… the narrator Encolpius sometimes introduces into the narrative details which the actor Encolpius did not at the time know but subsequently ascertained.' Hamer (2007, 322) argues that Petronius uses *sacer* to invoke a passage from Livy 5.47, concerning Marcus Manlius and the sacred geese, 'This suggestion of an epic battle also fits in with Encolpius' general tendency to view his actions through a heroic lens.' As Hamer points out, this does not entirely resolve Petronius' use of *sacer*, but arguably it does integrate well within the wider use of ironic heroic allusion in the text.

unsurprisingly – the trio lose their way, but are saved because Giton has marked the way with chalk, 'playing the part of an Ariadne in a first century A.D. Roman low-life milieu.'[39] During the quarrel, Giton takes on the role of the 'wife', as Ascyltus and Encolpius come to blows over who should take him as their prize. The scene is both mime and farce (Panayotakis 1995, 111-112), interspersed with some elegiac verse, after Ascyltus and Giton have departed.

Encolpius spends a clichéd three days weeping, breast-beating and lamenting his fate by the seaside, after the others depart (81), which is parodically reminiscent of Achilles' grief when Briseis is taken away from him (*Iliad* 1.348-50).[40] Quickly, though, Encolpius changes from being distraught to being filled with rage at what Giton and Ascyltus have done to him, and he sets out determined to revenge himself (Lateiner 2013, 317).[41] He storms through the streets thinking of nothing but blood and destruction – *caedem et sanguinem cogito* – but is pulled up by a passing solider (82). Encolpius tries to bluff his way out of the situation; the soldier easily sees through Encolpius' attempt;[42] and Encolpius returns to his lodgings with the wind taken out of his sails.[43]

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[39] As Panayotakis (1995, 111) observes, this sets up the mythological inversion to come: 'Giton, who plays the *prudens* Ariadne, not only is not going to be deserted by Encolpius, a new Theseus, but, according to this mythological travesty, *he* is going to be the one who will abandon Theseus for a Dionysus in the shape of Ascyltus!'

[40] Conte (1996, 1-2) draws attention to the link between Encolpius' grief and Achilles': 'It is easy for Encolpius, in a situation which has some features in common with that of Achilles… to yield to the temptation of the epic-heroic model, and to feel himself not so different from Achilles, even to the extent of repeating his model's behaviour.'

[41] Lateiner notes that: 'Elaborate plans for revenge contribute here to the parody of epic (cf. Verg. *Aen.* 9.44). Like his other grandiose plans, this one is soon completely deflated.' Conte (1996, 4-5 likewise draws attention to the Virgilian link, arguing that the combination of Homeric and Virgilian allusion, 'creates a pathetic melodrama from the banal material of his own daily affairs.' This kind of heroic allusion is very similar to the incident with the goose that we examined earlier, and highlights Encolpius' melodramatic nature.

[42] The soldier sees through Encolpius' ruse by observing that he is still wearing his slippers. Amusingly, Panayotakis (1995, 116) notes that Encolpius is wearing *phaecasia,* 'a kind of unmanly Greek shoes', the same footwear Encolpius earlier observes that Fortunata is wearing (67).

[43] Lateiner (2013, 317) comments: 'His anger (*ira*) at violation and rejection leads him repeatedly to rage and feckless, soliloquizing self-pity.' This is a common example of the kind of indulgent self-pity that Encolpius lapses into during the text, in order to feel victimised, and to make the situation more important than it arguably is.

This hinging between extreme emotions is typical of Encolpius, as is his inability to consider things rationally before acting. A consequence of Encolpius' masochism is that he has no objectivity. Instead of turning his mind to an action and considering its consequences before taking action, here Encolpius prefers to whip himself into an emotional frenzy by dwelling on the wrongs done to him, inflating his sense of injustice, becoming incensed, and rousing himself to revenge. Further, he can ignore his own culpability in what has unfolded by styling himself firstly as a victim, and secondly as a mythical hero. Playing these two roles allows him to ignore the role that he may have played in Giton's decision to choose Ascyltus over him. Denying this opportunity for self-awareness facilitates Encolpius' denial of responsibility, meaning that he can place the blame for his situation squarely on Ascyltus. Like Justine, a feature of Encolpius' masochism is denying his own culpability or responsibility in certain situations, and instead placing blame elsewhere. Encolpius' passivity is closely related to this displacement of reality and, in turn, responsibility. While he is seeing himself as a victim, or less frequently – and far less effectively – as a hero, he rarely engages with the reality of a situation, and thus frequently lapses into a passive state, where he appears to have little control over the way that events play out around him.

Encolpius' relationship with Giton shows how Encolpius' masochism makes him easy to manipulate. It is easy for Giton to play upon Encolpius' emotions. Encolpius displays his emotions clearly; he cannot effectively dissemble or mute his emotions, and so Giton can easily determine what he needs to do to take advantage of Encolpius' vulnerabilities. A particularly effective method of doing this is by grand displays of emotion, such as Giton's suicide attempt (94), which I will explore in detail later in this chapter. These emotional exhibitions are so effective because they

mirror Encolpius' own behavioural eccentricities, which is what Encolpius needs in order to assuage his own doubts. Muted emotions distress Encolpius: because he himself feels such a variegated range of emotions, small displays of emotion are ineffective upon him. He experiences things so largely that proportionately grand emotions are necessary to convince him of the genuineness of a person. While Justine was easily manipulated because of her naïve tendency to apply her Catholic belief system to everybody else and assume they were being honest, even when she had evidence to the contrary, similarly Encolpius is easily manipulated when people engage in the same kind of gratuitous displays of which he himself is so fond.

Giton holds all the power in the relationship with Encolpius: he is the one who initially chooses Ascyltus (80), causing Encolpius great misery; he is the one who returns to Encolpius (91) – not through any great heroic act by Encolpius, as he had initially planned – and is welcomed back willingly and eagerly by Encolpius because he is incapable of dissembling. Giton, to that extent, holds the power because he knows that he holds the power (Slater 1990, 101).[44] Encolpius is incapable of hiding his emotions or restraining them in any way, so that it is perfectly clear to Giton how much he means to Encolpius.

At this point, comparison between Eumolpus and Encolpius is useful, before turning to the *fabula inter amantes* that occurs when Eumolpus meets Giton (Walsh 1970, 98). Eumolpus possesses qualities that Encolpius tries to possess, but cannot successfully attain. As Beck (1979, 245) states: 'While Eumolpus may be a mediocre artist in one medium of works, he is a brilliant one in another: though a third-rate poet, he is a first-rate raconteur.' Eumolpus excels at that which Encolpius' passive tendencies prevent him from excelling at: where Eumolpus controls, Encolpius is

[44] Zeitlin (1971, 658) also observes in this regard that: 'Giton's modest demeanour and coy naiveté hide his unscrupulous manipulations.' Encolpius, however, is entirely taken in by Giton's veneer of modesty, because he is unable to see beyond the surface level of people's personalities.

controlled; and where Eumolpus is adaptable and proactive, Encolpius is reactive and susceptible.

In the Pergamum boy episode, Eumolpus poses as a philosopher of Socratic virtue in order to gain access to the boy's house, taking a position as the boy's mentor (85). Eventually he begins to bribe the boy in exchange for sexual favours: '*...si ego hunc puerum basiavero ita ut ille non sentiat, cras illi par columbarum donabo'* (If I can kiss this boy without him knowing, tomorrow I will give him a pair of doves, 85). This cycle continues until Eumolpus promises the boy a thoroughbred, which he cannot deliver (86). After this, the boy refuses Eumolpus' advances; Eumolpus ignores this refusal, and the relationship continues, until the boy's constant eagerness becomes too much for Eumolpus and he tells the boy: *'aut dormi aut ego iam patri dicam!'* ('now go to sleep or I'll tell your father!' 87).

In this inset Pergamum boy narrative we see several inversions to the typical pederastic relationship, which mirrors several of the inversions within the main body of the *Satyricon*. The boy as the sexual aggressor is one such inversion, one which we see reflected in the relationship between Encolpius and Giton (McGlathery 1998, 215). This is quite a different relationship than the one between Eumolpus and the boy: Giton dominates the relationship because Encolpius is incapable of doing so (McGlathery 1998, 216). Whereas Eumolpus and the boy are both aggressive and dominant personalities, both taking advantage of a situation in order to get what they want (Slater 1990, 93-94), Encolpius cannot take the dominant role.

Eumolpus tells this tale to Encolpius when he meets him in the gallery (83), and arguably is trying to portray a particular picture, or version, of himself, that will

appeal to Encolpius, and enable Eumolpus to take advantage of him.[45] For Eumolpus, at this moment Encolpius is his ideal reader, as it were, and therefore he shapes his narrative in order to elicit a positive reaction from Encolpius.[46] As we have seen, Encolpius is not particularly skilled at hiding his emotions, and Eumolpus quickly judges the type of story to tell when he enters the gallery and sees Encolpius (83),[47] and from there to manipulate Encolpius into taking him on as a companion.

Zeitlin (1971, 671) discusses Encolpius' susceptibility to being manipulated, and its relation to his inconstancy as a picaro: 'Because of these romantic and heroic illusions, he is rarely able to maintain even a temporary mastery over events or to preserve his own picaresque independence. More often that the true picaro, he becomes a victim.' The frequency with which Encolpius is conned, manipulated, and has his intentions and purpose easily thwarted, prevents him from taking control of a situation, and likewise contributes to his unreliability as a narrator, which I will examine further in section two. His narrative is coloured by his perception of what is happening around him, which is far too often misconceived.

Eumolpus is a character who reads situations well, and who can move seamlessly from moment to moment, when the need arises. A pertinent example of this is on board the ship, when Encolpius and Giton are trying to hide from Lichas; Eumolpus quickly sifts through a few different plans, before deciding that they should be disguised as prisoners, and he will take control of them (101-103) (Courtney 2002,

[45] Alter (1964, 71-72) discusses the importance of adaptability to a picaro, a category that we can loosely read Eumolpus as falling within. He observes that the 'picaro as master of his fate is the jack-of-all-trades, skilled manipulator, adept deceiver, artist of disguises, adaptable to all situations and all men.' Certainly here we can see how Eumolpus does a 'cold read' on Encolpius, and characterises himself in a way that allows him to get something out of Encolpius.

[46] On this point, Anderson (1999, 56) observes that the tale of the Pergamum boy 'works at a higher level to define quickly the side of Eumolpus' character that marks him out both as a fit companion for Encolpius and his runaways, and as a threat to the anti-hero's relationship with the young Giton.' As I will shortly examine, this latter point is something that escapes Encolpius' notice, until it is too late.

[47] Beck (1979, 247) observes that: 'Encolpius is again and again the dupe of his romantic expectations. People invariably seem more formidable, more exotic than they really are… So, too, the first appearance of Eumolpus suggests to him the image of the noble, harrowed, and dishonoured genius.'

159-160). He plays the role skilfully, until Giton is recognised. Later in the journey, he distracts everyone with his tale of the wife of Ephesus (110 ff.), to calm everyone down (Walsh 1970, 99-100); and he quickly ensures that they are well looked after when they arrive in Croton. Eumolpus' speech likewise illustrates his intelligence and adaptability. His speech is quite economical and straightforward, but conveys mood and expression well (Beck 1979, 250).[48] A good example of this is when Eumolpus relates his encounter with Ascyltus in the baths:

> *Nam et dum lavor… paene vapulavi, quia conatus sum circa solium sedentibus carmen recitare, et postquam de balneo tanquam de theatro eiectus sum, circuire omnes angulos coepi et clara voce Encolpion clamitare. Ex altera parte iuvenis nudus, qui vestimenta perdiderat, non minore clamoris indignatione Gitona flagitabat. Et me quidem pueri tanquam insanum imitatione petulantissima deriserunt, ilium autem frequentia ingens circumvenit cum plausu et admiratione timidissima… Tanto magis expedit inguina quam ingenia fricare…* (92)

> Now, while I was taking a bath, I nearly got beaten up, simply because I started to recite a poem to the people sitting around me, and just after I was thrown out of the bath, just like an actor, I started to search around every corner and calling out 'Encolpius!' in a loud

[48] Beck notes that 'Eumolpus' stories are effective not only because they express their author's experience and his real outlook on life but also because in structure and language they are subtly and economically crafted to bring out the desired point and purpose.' George (1966, 348) notes that the clever simplicity of Eumolpus' language is what makes it skillful: 'This is the keynote to Eumolpus' literariness: it always bears a functional relation to the content, where Giton's (and Encolpius') is no more than chromium plating.'

> voice. Somewhere else a naked young man, who had lost his clothes, was indignantly shouting for Giton. And as the boys just mocked me and childishly imitated me as crazy, instead a huge throng surrounded him with applause and spellbound admiration… A polished wick is much more profitable than a polished wit.[49]

While his speech here is quite simple, it cleverly sets up the contrast between Eumolpus and Ascyltus; as Beck (1979, 251) observes: 'ironic contrast is the very stuff of Eumolpus' stories'. The mirroring in their actions, and the vast difference in their reception, is cleverly constructed, and culminates in the witticism of the final line of the quotation, through the juxtaposition of *inguina* and *ingenia*.[50] Panayotakis (1995, 124) argues that the parallel spectacles 'signify that in this passage we have to deal with another scene structured as a show in front of a theatrical audience.' I see it as a central example of how Eumolpus can capture and entertain an audience. For example, where Trimalchio relies on entrapping his guests and virtually bribing them into being "entertained" by his stories, Eumolpus' witty, entertaining, and colourful style of storytelling alone allows him to capture an audience.[51]

Encolpius, on the other hand, is passive, submissive and suggestible, characteristics that all make their way into his speech. Indeed, as George (1966, 350-351) notes, Encolpius' speech frequently parrots the speech of others.[52] This kind of parroting of style occurs throughout the text, depending on where Encolpius is and

[49] The final sentence of this translation comes from Sullivan (1965), as it so deftly captures Eumolpus' wit.
[50] Courtney (2001, 145) notes that the symmetry of Eumolpus and Ascyltus in this scene foreshadows that Eumolpus is imminently going to take over Ascyltus' position within the plot.
[51] Beck (1979, 246) comments on the positive attention Eumolpus' stories receive, observing particularly the emotional responses that Tryphaena and Lichas give to the tale of the Wife of Ephesus (113), and how Encolpius reacts 'with alternating Schadenfreude and depression' to Eumolpus' retelling of his experience in the baths (92).
[52] George notes that Encolpius' opening discussion with Agamemnon is a good example of this, as is the quarrel with Ascyltus at 79-80.

with whom he is speaking. It makes it difficult to discern what the real Encolpius is actually like, beneath all the mimicry and dramatisation. I would argue that this is tied to his lack of real identity, or sense of self, which instead seems to be tied to the company he keeps. Not only does he take cues on how to speak from other people, but his behaviour and direction often seems to be tied to them as well.

Finally, the scene where Eumolpus meets Giton clearly illustrates the inherent differences between Eumolpus and Encolpius, and how Giton uses melodrama and theatrics in order to manipulate Encolpius. When they first meet, Eumolpus immediately offers himself as a lover to Giton – something that should be unsurprising to both the reader and Encolpius, given the narrative that Eumolpus has just disclosed – and Encolpius quickly turns his wrath on him: *et ego iracundus sum, et tu libidinosus; video, quam non conveniat his moribus* (I am passionate and you are libidinous: understand, these are dispositions which should not come together, 94). This is a curious statement, leaving aside the fact that Encolpius himself is both *iracundus* and *libidinosus*. It is true that two men, one who is easily provoked and irascible, and one who is lecherous, should not enter a situation like this. But, of course, that is exactly what Encolpius has just allowed to happen, even though he apparently is aware of Eumolpus' proclivities. He has already noted to himself his worry that he has brought home Ascyltus' double (92), which is what he has done, but perhaps to an even greater extent (Slater 1990, 101). Ascyltus' only crime is to share the same passion for Giton that Encolpius does; to no greater extent than Encolpius himself does Ascyltus display 'untoward' intentions, and the inevitable parting of Ascyltus' and Encolpius' friendship occurs because of this shared affection. Eumolpus, on the other hand, seems to have no need for any kind of genuine affection; rather he operates primarily on the pleasure principle, simply taking what

he wants and discarding it when it has become too much effort, as he did with the Pergamum boy (McGlathery 1998, 212). Therefore, to have brought Eumolpus into contact with Giton was a foolish error on Encolpius' part, if not an unsurprising one.

Following this statement to Eumolpus, the scene quickly devolves into sheer farce (Walsh 1970, 98). According to Encolpius, Eumolpus is struck down by his stinging attack, but it is far more likely that he is quickly summing up the best way to take advantage of Encolpius, which he quickly does by locking Encolpius in the room and running off after Giton, who had already exited the room earlier, perceiving Encolpius' mounting agitation (Courtney 2001, 146).[53] Encolpius, proving his earlier statement of *iracundus sum*, instantly decides that he shall have to kill himself, being bereft of all hope. At this point Giton returns, highlighting the fact that Encolpius must have been locked in only for a matter of moments, and declares that he must be the one to commit suicide first (*...specta invicem, quod me spectare voluisti*, 94*)*. The *mimica mors* is then in full swing, as Giton then snatches a (blunt) razor from Eumolpus' servant and draws it across his throat.[54] Encolpius immediately attempts to follow him, only to realise that no harm has been done, whilst Eumolpus and his slave watch on.

Giton's choice of the razor seems to be a premeditated or considered move;[55] as I mentioned earlier, throughout the novel Giton makes extravagant, seemingly calculated moves that serve to create the best possible scenario for him. He initially

[53] Panayotakis (1995, 123) observes that the hasty entrances and exits that pervade this scene are reminiscent of Aristophanic comedy, 'which add to the slapstick tone of the scene.'

[54] Henderson (2010, 486) argues that in terms of parody, this episode most closely resembles 'the nurse's interruption of Myrrha's suicide in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (10.382-388)… [Giton's] theatrics affording Encolpius the opportunity to play the Virgilian hero Nisus or the Ovidian heroine Thisbe…' As Conte (1996, 78) observes: 'But Encolpius is not Nisus, nor is Giton Euryalus: the other characters in the episode have no doubt of this… That is why Eumolpus and his slave are not particularly alarmed and can stand by enjoying the scenario of the lovers' death… It is a farcical death, a show by actors playing a part.' However, in that specific moment, only Giton was aware that he was the one playing a part.

[55] Slater (1990, 103) points out the fact that Giton collapses, even though the razor was blunt, which suggests that he was acting out a scene, rather than making a genuine attempt.

chooses Ascyltus over Encolpius; he then returns to Encolpius after this absence, meaning that Encolpius' affections for him have only increased, having missed him so much. Whether or not Giton did endure any kind of misery during this absence is unclear; he certainly tells Encolpius that he does, but this could be another deception intended to induce Encolpius' pity and guilt (Courtney 2001, 144). This attempted suicide is arguably another calculated move on Giton's part, which achieves its purpose of not only making Encolpius forget his recent rage at Eumolpus – and perhaps by extension Giton, given that he had betrayed him before – but apparently reaffirms his devotion to Encolpius (Panayotakis 1995, 127), another possible by-product of Encolpius' frenzied state.

George argues that the style of Giton's speech mirrors the absurdity of what he says, and thus 'lowers the risk of their being taken seriously' (George 1966, 343). This is certainly true from an exterior perspective: Giton's words and behaviour should be viewed as speculatively and cautiously as Encolpius himself is, as Eumolpus appears to do in respect of both of them during the scene at the lodging house. However, Encolpius lacks the ability to be so judicious or discerning, and thus he is exactly the sort of person who would fall for Giton's absurdities, and does so. When Giton exhibits the same tendency to aggrandise, and to speak and act with overblown emotion and language,[56] whether purposefully or as a symptom of his time with Encolpius, Encolpius is entirely taken in by it. This comes back to this idea of masochistic gullibility: Encolpius buys into Giton's theatrics and allows himself to be manipulated through them, in the same way that Justine was manipulated by Roland, who took advantage of her trusting nature.

[56] George (1966, 341) argues that: 'The spurious emotions and false drama demanded of the declaimer in the rhetorical schools have in him become indistinguishable from genuine emotions and real drama.'

Encolpius' passivity can clearly be seen during the Quartilla episode. The Quartilla episode presents a confection of emotions, and begins when we see Quartilla and her cohort appear in order to exact revenge on Encolpius, Ascyltus, and Giton, presumably because at some point earlier in the text they have interrupted Quartilla conducting secret Priapean rites. We know this because Quartilla's maid states that Encolpius & Co have interrupted Quartilla's mystic rites (16), and because Quartilla herself states that she is concerned that they will make public that which they observed in the shrine of Priapus (17).[57] This is the only information that we are offered; we do not know when these events happened in the context of the very murky timeline that we have, nor do we know even approximately where it took place.[58] Arguably, however, knowing precisely what had happened before may not necessarily assist greatly in making sense of the scene that follows. It may explain why it is happening, but not necessarily what is happening. The fragmented nature of the episode makes it more difficult to comprehend, which serves to magnify the incongruity of what seems to be unfolding, and Encolpius offers us little to aid in its comprehension.[59]

The haphazard nature of the scene is relative to the changing moods of both Quartilla and Encolpius. Quartilla inspires fear in the group before she even enters the room, with a bold knock on the door (16), which breaks the bolt and the door easily

[57] Baldwin (2006, 39) observes that Encolpius does not disagree with Quartilla's assertion, which may validate it to some extent, and that 'he does reassure Quartilla that he will not betray the secret, exhibiting (if only for reasons of self-preservation) more respect than scorn for Priapus.' I think that the idea of self-preservation is key to the way that this scene plays out more broadly. Taking together Encolpius' passivity, and his sense of self-preservation, it is possible that he is just saying whatever he thinks Quartilla wants to hear.

[58] Citing Sullivan, Walsh, and Van Thiel, Schmeling (1996, 460-463) sets out a proposed chronology that suggests the mystic rites scene may have directly preceded the fragments of the Quartilla episode that we have, and that both Quartilla scenes precede the scene with Agamemnon that now typically opens the text. As with much scholarship on the *Satyricon*, this timeline explains certain features of the extant Quartilla scene but not others. Encolpius' lack of explanation about who Quartilla is and how they met her makes more sense, if they had only very recently encountered her, but Encolpius' apparent confusion about Quartilla's purpose and personality remains incongruous and unanswered.

[59] Section two will further examine the structure of the *Satyricon*, and how the text may be episodic, rather than a continuous plot leading to an eventual resolution.

opens,[60] and when she eventually enters she puts on a mesmerising display of grief (17). Quartilla is alternatively angry and distressed that Encolpius will divulge her holy mysteries, and when he promises not to, she suddenly becomes manically excited (18).[61] Encolpius is unable to perceive that the shifts in Quartilla's moods are anything but genuine, arguably because his own moods are liable to shift just as quickly and dramatically; as Conte (1996, 112) states: 'Encolpius is inevitably deeply impressed by the tragic poses of Quartilla, and his own naïve tendency to pathetic gesture drives him into the trap.' From this point the mood of the scene continues in an up and down manner, devolving into an aphrodisiac fuelled quasi-orgy (20-21), followed by a slightly more respectable dinner party (21), followed with the rape of Encolpius and Ascyltus by a prostitute (23-24), and finally the 'wedding' between Giton and Pannychis (26).[62]

The Quartilla scene displays many of Encolpius' emotional and behavioural fluctuations. His masochistic nature prevents him from thinking rationally, and perhaps finding a way to escape. He becomes the constant victim, through his inability to check his emotions, which would perhaps enable lucid thought, and would in turn allow him to exert some semblance of control and thus extricate himself from the situation. Similarly, we can recall Justine's monotonous victimisation: she defaulted to the same behaviour with each libertine, because it is her nature to be the

[60] Courtney (2001, 65) points out that in all likelihood the lock broke on the door due to the battering that Ascyltus gave it earlier (11), 'but no doubt we are meant to understand that the startled companions see it as a traditional sign of an epiphany.'

[61] Rankin (1971, 40) notes that: 'Quartilla's volatile personality, veering from one pole to another, between hatred and favour, laughter and tears, creates an atmosphere of mystification in which it is impossible for her captives to be sure of anything…' This eccentricity and grandiosity is the kind of behaviour that a susceptible character like Encolpius easily falls for, and by which he is overwhelmed.

[62] Sandy (1969, 294) argues that Encolpius initially baulks at the idea of the marriage on moralistic grounds: 'Encolpius' reaction to Quartilla's disgusting proposal is that of any reasonably moral person.' Alternatively, Courtney (2001, 70) argues that it is more to do with the way that Encolpius sees Giton: 'Encolpius… protests that Giton is a modest young boy (at the moment this may be an opportunistic claim, but it is actually how the starry-eyed Encolpius sees Giton).' I prefer Courtney's interpretation, which echoes the point I made earlier about how Encolpius repeatedly is fooled by Giton's veneer of coquettish naivety.

'gratuitous victim' (Carter 1979, 39). Similarly in *Justine,* Justine urgently wanted to escape from each of the libertines, but was not willing to do anything that would compromise her beliefs to achieve this, and so waited passively for an opportunity to present itself. Encolpius is ruled by his passivity, his femininity, and his tendency to self-pity (Lateiner 2013, 317). It is not a matter of not wanting to escape, or not wanting the scene playing out around him to end; it is simply a matter of not being able to convert these feelings to a sensible and proactive course of action. He waits to be helped, to be rescued, rather than creating that help for himself.

He initially shows some resolve by determining that the three men could overcome Quartilla and her cohort:

> *Tres enim erant mulierculae… contra nos, quibus si nihil aliud, virilis sexus esset. Immo ego sic iam paria composueram, ut si depugnandum foret, ipse cum Quartilla consisterem, Ascyltus cum ancilla, Giton cum virgine…* (19)

> *They were three mere women…we had at least our manhood in our favour, if nothing else… Indeed, I had already matched our forces in pairs. If it came to a real fight, I was to face Quartilla, Ascyltus her maid, Giton the girl…*[63]

But Encolpius is afraid and he cannot see past his fear. He allows his fear of Quartilla, and what is about to happen to him, to control his behaviour, meaning that he is too

[63] Encolpius later reveals (25) that the *virgine* could not be aged more than seven (…*quam non plus quam septem annos habere videbatur [et ea ipsa primum cum Quartilla in cellam venerat nostram]),* further adding to the oddity of the men being so terrified of three mere 'women'.

overcome to take any action.[64] Thus, despite recognising that the opportunity is there to overwhelm Quartilla, Encolpius submits (*Tunc vero excidit omnis constantia attonitis, et mors non dubia miserorum oculos coepit obducere/But then all our resolution yielded to astonishment, and the darkness of certain death proceeded to fall on our unhappy eyes*, 19). As McMahon (1998, 201) notes: 'Once at the mercy of Quartilla, then, Encolpius is physically, psychically, and socially relegated to a condition of compliance with her will and that of her company.' Encolpius becomes overwhelmed and does not resist Quartilla's control (McMahon 1998, 201).[65]

It is difficult to tell, both because of the fragmentary nature of the text and Encolpius' unreliability, whether it should be 'our resolution' or Encolpius' resolution, if indeed the others possessed any to begin with. It was, of course, Encolpius' observation that the three men could fight each particular woman, and this is followed only by his observation that they have collectively lost their resolve.[66] This loss of resolve by Encolpius persists for the rest of the scene. The next we hear of escape is when Encolpius remarks that there is no one to come to the rescue (*sed nec in auxilio erat quisquam,* 21) and, besides that, when he tried to call for help (*invocare Quiritum fidem),* Quartilla's maid pricked him with a hair pin. Encolpius still thinks of escape, but does not think that it is something he could do for himself; he only thinks of *being* rescued. To this end, Encolpius' submissive behaviour mirrors the variegated forms of abuse which he suffers at Quartilla's behest; he is sodomised repeatedly, raped by Quartilla with her staff, generally passed around unwillingly

[64] As Richlin (1983, 194) observes: 'Quartilla… is far beyond the powers of the three cowardly *fratres* to resist.

[65] McMahon notes that: 'Even as the narrator relating the fearful and uncertain atmosphere of the Quartilla episode, Encolpius is also deprived of both the opportunity and the actual ability to express his reactions to such threatening events with any success beyond a simple plea for leniency.' That is, Quartilla takes control of the entire situation, and Encolpius does not have the capacity to try to take it back.

[66] Lateiner (2013, 307) observes that 'These men show us how "real men" should not behave.' This fits into the wider idea of masochistic agency. Here Encolpius' surrenders the agency he has as a Roman man, and capitulates to Quartilla's power.

from person to person, and even when he is not being sexually assaulted, he is being pricked (*pungebat)* by Quartilla's maid, Psyche. He fulfils the passive role both in a sexual sense and an anti-masculine sense; in this sense, Slater (1990, 42) observes the shift in the balance of power that permeates the entire episode: 'the women and pathics become the aggressors. Encolpius and Ascyltus are forced to perform sexually by means of fear, actual violence, and drugs.' Encolpius has not the wit nor the aggression to invert the roles as he should be able to do as a Roman man (McMahon 1998, 200);[67] rather he fulfils the weaker role, the feminine role, and sees no other option but to accept his fate and wait for his release (Lateiner 2013, 307). This is a feature of masochism, this unwilling and yet willing victimisation. We saw similar behaviour with Justine, who progressed through a series of victimisations without being able to relinquish her status as victim.

Encolpius' reactions and emotions are often so intense that it becomes difficult to distinguish the actual value of an action. For example, he does not react with any more fear or distress when he is raped than when Quartilla first announces herself and her intentions.[68] This is in the context of almost a series of emotional resets, where Encolpius is all of a sudden relaxed and happy and laughing, and then quickly extremely distressed. This is, of course, one facet of his unreliability as a narrator, an inability to convey any kind of emotional spectrum from which the reader can classify a response, which will be explored further in section two, but it is also a facet of his masochism, in that he has very little control over his emotions and his ability to

[67] McMahon notes that: 'As a result of Encolpius' failure to respond physically in the face of the eager and energetic attentions of his assaulter, his social and cultural status is further demeaned.' This occurs throughout the text; indeed, it is difficult to find an instance where Encolpius retains his social and cultural status for any sustained period of time.

[68] For example, when Quartilla explains that no one is to be allowed in, until she has taken from them the remedy for her fever, Encolpius explains *ego autem frigidior hieme Gallica factus nullum potui verbum emittere/* but I went colder than a winter in Gall, and was unable to say a word (20), which is arguably as strong a statement – if not stronger – than in the midst of the orgy, when he despairs *non tenui ego diuitius lacrimas, sed ad ultimam perductus tristitiam/* I was unable to hold back my tears any more, but was brought to the greatest misery.

express them. Aside from these incidents – and his submission at Trimalchio's dinner that will be explored in the later chapter – there are several instances on Croton when we see Encolpius willingly surrender his agency. First, he allows himself to be steered around and controlled by Eumolpus; then he allows himself to be spat upon in the inn, 'I put my hands on my eyes, and without any beginning for mercy… whipped and spat on' (132); and, finally, he allows Proselenus to use him as she will ('*ac me... nihil recusantem'*), including allowing her to thrash him with a wooden rod while he lies there crying (134), shortly after she has called him 'soft and weak' (*mollis et debilis*). Here he gives himself over to another's control and makes no attempt to stop what is happening to him; instead, he readily acknowledges that he is allowing it to happen.

Thus, we can conclude several key things concerning Encolpius' masochism. Strong emotions, be they positive or negative, tend to make Encolpius choose to surrender his agency, and thus be susceptible to control. Further to that, Encolpius' mythomania leaves him predisposed to overreacting and overdramatising situations that may not warrant such excitement. The way that these heightened emotions affect Encolpius' narration will be explored in section two, but for now it is evident that not only does this extremity of emotion cloud his judgment, but it also impacts on his ability to exert control. When he is upset, scared, or worried, he allows himself to be led, as the old lady does when she takes him to Oenothea, or he allows himself to be controlled, as he is by Quartilla. Encolpius is easily manipulated, particularly by Giton, and he lacks the insight to realise that it is happening, and it is unlikely that he would be able to stop it even if he did. Each of these occasions leads to Encolpius suffering in some way, even if it is only transient suffering. It is the culmination of these actions that establishes Encolpius' masochistic identity. Thus, understanding

Encolpius' masochism allows the reader to appreciate the influence of Encolpius over the text, by identifying points of commonality in his seemingly unpredictable behaviour. This allows a deeper examination of his motivations and behaviours within specific episodes, which can then be juxtaposed and facilitate a more cohesive understanding of the text as a whole.

Catullus: the masochistic lover

This chapter will focus primarily on Catullus' relationship with Lesbia, as this is where his masochistic characteristics are most clearly exhibited. Catullus shows the three central tropes through which we have been analysing masochism: namely, passivity, control, and displacement of responsibility, but he has a far greater awareness of his own behaviour than Justine and Encolpius. Examining the arc of the Lesbia poems illustrates that Catullus surrenders his patriarchal agency to Lesbia, meaning that Catullus' feelings for Lesbia control him, and that, consequently, Catullus' increasing frustration with himself and Lesbia leads him to place blame entirely on her. Catullus' passivity is more nuanced than we have seen in the previous two chapters, and is intricately tied in with the tropes of control and responsibility. Catullus surrenders himself to his feelings for Lesbia – and to Lesbia herself – and is the passive victim of them, in the sense that he does not actively change his own situation; as Wiseman (1985, 146) observes: 'There is one thing about her [Lesbia] that comes through clearly enough – her dominance. She acted, he reacted.' However, Catullus is not a gratuitous victim in the same way as Justine, or an incompetent victim like Encolpius; rather, Catullus is entirely aware of what is happening, but does not believe that he can change it. This awareness leads him to rail against his situation, and to project that anger and frustration onto Lesbia, rather than to change it himself. This chapter will examine how these three central ideas of control, choice (passivity) and responsibility manifest. This chapter focuses on Catullus' perception and construction alone, and the next chapter will broaden the perspective of the masochistic reading, to consider if Catullus is really as helpless as he perceives himself to be.

I begin by outlining the theoretical basis of masochistic love, in order to highlight the aspects of Catullus' persona on which this chapter will focus. As examined earlier, broadly masochism 'refers to a personality structure based on submission and dependence' (Charme 1983, 222). Critically, this submission of agency and dependent tendency may not necessarily manifest in all facets of someone's life or personality, but rather present in only certain spheres, such as love or religion. Baumeister (1988, 36) observes that masochism is often prevalent among esteemed and powerful men, because 'exerting responsibility and maintaining esteem may become emotionally draining', and thus the individual may look for a psychological outlet in another facet of their life, through the practice of sexual masochism, or masochistic love.

Fenichel (1945, 352) sees masochism as an amplification of infatuation and falling in love; consequently, the masochist loses independence and autonomy, in their desperation and desire to maintain that experience. As Charme (1983, 222) observes: 'he lives through his partner, seeing his partner as everything. His willingness to sacrifice everything for his partner reflects a feeling of his own insignificance and helplessness compared to the other's magnificence and omnipotence.' Finally, and perhaps most pertinent to an examination of Catullus: 'The more suffering he is willing to endure, the greater his love must be' (Charme 1983, 222). This process of self-sacrifice can lead the masochist to place blame on the other person, seeing them as responsible for the masochist's behaviour, and, in turn, cause the masochist to debase themselves in order to earn approval. The Catullan persona exhibits this compulsion to surrender control and independence for Lesbia, and to give primacy to her above everything else. Similarly, as the Lesbia poems progress, Catullus becomes fixated on the idea that the suffering he endures proves

his love for Lesbia, and that ultimately Lesbia is responsible for inflicting that suffering on him, and should be held accountable.

Poem 51 is a fruitful starting point for this examination, notionally exploring Catullus' first encounter with Lesbia.[69] This poem both establishes and foreshadows the characteristics that come to mark Catullus as a masochist. Engaging in a translation of Sappho allows Catullus to place himself in the feminine role; and the fourth strophe, which departs from Sappho's poem, individualises Catullus' own situation and addresses the challenge that he faces. As D'Angour (2006, 299) argues: '*Otium* is a nuisance for Catullus because, one supposes, it allows him to brood obsessively about Lesbia. The self-address and insistent threefold repetition (*otium…otio…otium*) drive home the point that this represents Catullus' individual viewpoint rather than Sappho's.' I will return to the fourth strophe shortly, and the consequences of *otium* for Catullus, after examining the previous three strophes.

Poem 51 is the poem where the loss of control and surrender of self that Fenichel and Charme outline begins. The first two lines (*ille mi par esse deo videtur, ille, si fas est, superare divos*/ that man seems to me to be equal to a god, that man, if it is allowed, surpasses the gods) position not only Lesbia's companion as godlike, but, by extension, Lesbia herself as *diva*. As Fredricksmeyer (1965, 157) notes: 'Lesbia bestows divine felicity and perfection upon her lover and thus she herself is revealed, indirectly, as *diva*, goddess par excellence.' In identifying Lesbia in this way, Catullus elevates Lesbia beyond the mere human, idealising her with divine characteristics. As we will see in examining poems 5 and 7 particularly, Lesbia's pseudo-divinity contributes to the uniqueness of their love, as Catullus defines it. The counterpart to recognising Lesbia as divine is that it eventually places an expectation

[69] This chapter assumes that the fourth strophe belongs to poem 51. I echo here Adler's statement (1981, 174) that there is no intention to argue for a unified reading, but rather to explore a reading of the poem that includes the fourth strophe as a part of the whole.

on Lesbia that she cannot live up to, at least in terms of the expectations that Catullus places upon her. As we will see in examining poems 11 and 58 particularly, Lesbia's indiscretions, her 'faults', shatter the insular world that Catullus tries to create for them.

The second strophe explores Catullus' reaction to seeing Lesbia, and it is here that we see the qualities that will form Catullus' masochistic persona begin to appear. Particularly, the use of *nam simul te* highlights the difference between the experience of Lesbia's companion and Catullus' own experience, and in turn the simultaneously positive and negative effects that Lesbia can cause, which reflects more broadly on all the Lesbia poems.[70] Fitzgerald (1995, 136) describes Catullus' knowledge of Lesbia as 'both disillusionment and enlightenment'; arguably, this is representative of the way that Lesbia is presented more broadly, where pleasure is counterbalanced by an equal amount of pain. Catullus watches Lesbia's companion (*qui sedens adversus identidem te spectat et audit dulce ridentem*/ who, sitting opposite you, again and again watches you, and hears you laughing sweetly) and Catullus, in response, is struck dumb (*nihil est super mi*); while Lesbia's companion can easily, even habitually (*identidem*) hold and enjoy Lesbia's attention, Catullus is rendered powerless at the sight of Lesbia.

O'Higgins (1990, 157) observes that 'Catullus' naming of his beloved – Lesbia – also grants her a specific identity and a more substantial independent existence than Sappho's anonymous girl.' Indeed, specifying Lesbia's name also serves to specify Catullus' anguish: it gives it an external focus, and moves control, notionally, from Catullus to Lesbia. It is this shift of control that is key to a masochistic reading of the Catullan persona. Catullus' laboured or restricted speech in

[70] Arkins (1982) observes that: 'What should be emphasised about poem 51 is that Catullus is in love with Lesbia and finds it a painful experience.' This pain transcends, of course, beyond this poem, and will come to be a marker of Catullus' experience with Lesbia generally.

the third strophe (*lingua torpet*) illustrates how he is rendered powerless by Lesbia, and is controlled by his desire. 'The central two stanzas of poem 51 show vividly the overpowering effect which his passion had on Catullus' (Fredricksmeyer 1983, 45); that is, the physicality of Catullus' reactions foreshadows the masochistic peril to come. Catullus' inability to control himself makes him submissive, and at this point he is submissive to his feelings for Lesbia, not even to Lesbia herself.

The final strophe similarly foreshadows Catullus' struggles. Here, arguably, *otium* can be read as analogous to the stasis that Catullus' love for Lesbia places him in. Unable to exert change himself, Catullus finds himself stuck, unable to alter his own circumstances.[71] Justine suffered from the same kind of immovability: she could not change her Catholic viewpoint, and in turn could not overcome her situation; similarly, Catullus cannot overcome the paralysing effect that Lesbia has upon his autonomy, and thus cannot escape his feelings for her. As Stark (1957, 333) accurately observes: '*Amor* und *otium* bedingen hier fast sich gegenseitig… Sein *otium* ist, wie die *otia* des Paris, die Liebe; so sehr, daß diese *otium* für ihn *molestum* ist.' Catullus' love, unless checked or controlled, will eventually torment him, and overrun him.

However, despite the danger that Catullus appears to forewarn, or self-diagnose, in this strophe, he makes no attempt to counsel himself away from *otium*; rather, as we know, he walks headlong into it. Woodman (2006, 611) notes that: 'Whereas we might have expected Catullus to end the sentence by giving himself some kind of medical advice such as *petendum est*… instead he substitutes *molestum est*… Catullus is capitalising on the common notion that "the cure is worse than the

[71] Fredricksmeyer (1983, 45) notes that: 'The last stanza, moreover, indicates that the experience of meeting and falling in love with Lesbia brought on him a personal crisis, a traumatic break with his earlier life.' This personal crisis, explored forcibly and insistently through the seventies, will be explored further in section two, when examining how Catullus' perception and portrayal of Lesbia, and of his relationship with her, influences the narrative.

disease".' This is reminiscent of the notion of willing victimisation, which I have discussed in relation to both Encolpius and Justine, where a masochist allows something to happen, because the alternate course appears worse, or appears more difficult. Catullus, at this point, cannot entertain the notion of not pursuing Lesbia, despite the apparent danger (*otium et reges prius et beatas perdidit urbes*/ otium first destroyed rulers and prosperous cities).[72] Segal (1970, 30) notes that 'the tone of hesitation and doubt indicates, of course, that Catullus recognises this *otium* as no easy possession. It has its dangers. But, just because it is dangerous or even harmful (*molestum*), it is not necessarily repudiated.' We can recall here Charme's earlier point on suffering as proof of love: Catullus is willing to make this choice, regardless of the pain that it may cause, or the destruction, to subjugate himself to Lesbia in order to prove his love.

Thus, this poem foreshadows several tropes that we can now examine more broadly within the Lesbia poems: firstly, Catullus' idealisation of Lesbia, casting her as a *diva domina*; and, secondly, Catullus' choice to fly in the face of his own apparent advice, and choose *otium* over *negotium*. This will have wider repercussions in the context of how Catullus can them assimilate their relationship into the Roman context, particularly the expectations that Roman society has of Catullus himself.[73] Finally, while the trope of responsibility is not explicitly foreshadowed in this poem, the collocation of Catullus' idealisation of Lesbia, and his decision to risk his own destruction for her, pre-empts the resentment that will eventually manifest in Catullus' attitude towards Lesbia.

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[72] Fredricksmeyer (1965, 161) observes that Catullus 'in no way attempts, or admonishes himself, to terminate this condition and turn instead towards *negotium*.'

[73] Miller (2002, 429) observes that 'Catullus is very conscious of whom Roman society wants him to be.' This, in time, will be one of the prominent factors in the disintegration of his relationship with Lesbia.

It is useful to turn to the theoretical framework through which the remaining poems will be examined. Conte discusses the redefinition of language and the 'reduction of the world to a partial field of vision' (1994, 37) in relation to elegiac poetry. Though Conte deals specifically with elegiac poetry, arguably elements of it are clearly present in the way that the character of Catullus defines his love for Lesbia. Conte (1994, 37) states:

> [The poet] establishes his identity as diversity, asserts that he is enclosed within part of the world (let us call it love for now) which seems to him to be self-sufficient and to contain in microcosm all that is necessary for a full life. But the "model of the world" that is thereby proposed, if confronted with reality, will turn out to be partial and will clearly reveal its ideological lines of force.

This is certainly what Catullus attempts to do in poems 5 and 7. He seeks to restructure the context and conditions of the world that he designs for himself and Lesbia; he structures his microcosm around the time he and Lesbia have together, and the quantity of the desire between them. Both time and desire become immeasurable in Catullus' newly established construction. Conte (1994, 37) further argues that: 'At this centre of this ideological system is located the conception of the lover-poet as a slave–of his beloved, his passion, his incurable weakness, and ultimately his own poetry.' While the trope of *servitium amoris* is typically not discussed within Catullus' poetry, arguably the underlying characteristics that underpin *servitium amoris* are present in some form within Catullus' work, and as these characteristics intersect with masochistic qualities, they warrant further examination.

Copley (1947, 285) defines *servitium amoris* as:

> An expression of the lover's humility and abasement, of his willingness in the name of love to undergo punishments and to undertake duties which in real life were felt to be peculiar to the slave alone… it idealises love out of all relation to reality… and transports the poets into a fantasy-world created out of their own imagination.

The critical aspects to focus on in Catullus' Lesbia poems are the ideas of debasement, and idealising love out of all relation to reality. One of Lyne's arguments against *servitium amoris* being present in Catullus is that 'Catullus' ideals of love excluded acquiescence (let alone glorying) in degradation' (1979, 121). It may be true that Catullus' ideals of love did not include debasement or degradation, but, as we will see in the remainder of this chapter, the reality that Catullus must eventually face is far from the idealisation that we see set out in poems such as 5, 7, and 51.

Rather, absent in Catullus is the enjoyment in servility. Catullus expresses his frustration with his relationship with Lesbia through various coloured reactions to what he perceives as Lesbia's apathy and antagonism. To argue that Catullus does not portray *servitium amoris* because he does not name it or accept it seems counterproductive. Instead it is more useful to appreciate Catullus as portraying a negative response to servility, while still experiencing and conveying the themes and associated experiences of an enslaved lover. Debasement, servility – and to an extent compliance – all exist in Catullus, and all these qualities form part of what Lyne and Copley define as *servitium amoris*. Perhaps a useful way of considering *servitium*

amoris in Catullus would be to express it as a facet of *saevitia amoris*. Catullus often feels that he is being savaged, that he is caught up in a maelstrom of inexplicable and unfair emotions, and yet is unable to extricate himself. He regards Lesbia as cruel and he feels that he is being treated cruelly. Yet as much as he rebels and reacts to this cruelty, he does not free himself from it. Rather than going hand in hand with *servitium*, *amor* in Catullus more readily brings to mind *furor* or similarly negative emotions, such as what is fluently captured in ideas such as *odi et amo* (85.1).[74] Catullus may not glorify self-degradation, and may not explicitly consent to it, as for example Tibullus does, but he also does not walk away from Lesbia, in order to cease that abasement. This intersects with the masochistic tropes of control and responsibility. Catullus cannot compel himself to leave Lesbia, and so blames his situation squarely on her.

It is the idea of *saevitia amoris* that distinguishes *servitium amoris* from masochism, because even as Catullus rails against his treatment, he still gets pleasure from it. This is something that I will return to in greater detail in the next Catullus chapter, when I examine the power dynamic between Catullus and Lesbia. In *servitium amoris*, the lover has placed himself in that situation willingly and has accepted his place there (as is the case with Tibullus); the masochist, however, refuses to accept that it is his choice that has led him there, and instead places blame on the other party.

In terms of the idealisation of love out of all proportion with reality, it is instructive to return to Conte once more, as this will position our examination for the remainder of the chapter. Conte (1994, 41-42) discusses the difficulties inherent in the

[74] In this vein, Lateiner (1977, 27) observes that: 'Love (in a wide sense) and anger are the subjects of Catullus' poetry (cf. *odi et amo*); a vocabulary of neologisms and unusually common, coarse, and strange words distinguishes it… The emotions of hate and love find rhetorical and poetic expression in *laudatio* and *detraction.*'

insular world that is created, when the lover tries to 'recuperate' outside elements within that world:

> He will thereby create a condition of permanent discomfort, a tension between irreconcilable rhetorics. The vicissitudes of an amatory relation (a night refused, the mistress's whim or inconstancy) will not only make him suffer for what they are, but will also set off a crisis that threatens the precarious equilibrium of the structure of elegy and disintegrates its artful construction by restoring the transplanted elements to their original context and meaning.

That is, bringing values such as *fides* and *pietas* into the poetic microcosm – mores of contemporary Rome that are abrogated by a love affair – highlights the intrinsic tension that exists within it. An apt example of this is the *aeternum sanctae foedus amicitiae* that Catullus hopes for in poem 109, a much-contested poem among Catullan scholars. Konstan (1973, 102-03) points out that the language of the poem is almost at odds with itself. In the first line, Lesbia offers Catullus an *amor*, carrying with it this sense of transience: a fleeting love affair, which is certainly a common enough meaning of *amor*. Having related Lesbia's offer in the first two lines, Catullus spends the rest of the poem wishing that he could transform this transient *amor* into a binding alliance, an *aeternum sanctae foedus amicitiae.* Linguistically this expression is both curious and complex. Firstly, it is an unusual form of expression for a lover. Ross (1969, 81 ff.) notes that it takes its context from a political sphere, rather than any kind of erotic terminology. Literally it seems that Catullus desires an enduring

alliance of sacred friendship, carrying over concepts that exist well outside of the erotic domain, in order to try and stabilise and solidify his relationship with Lesbia. Lyne (1980, 23 ff.) disagrees with Ross, and attributes the term to being indicative of the social dealings of the aristocratic class. I prefer Skinner's reading (2003, 69-70), which posits that both Ross and Lyne are wrong to read it as explicitly political and explicitly social; rather, it represents the blending of the political and the socio-cultural, emblematic of the development of the Lesbia poems.

Catullus uses poems 5 and 7 to create an insular environment, in which he controls the parameters of his own existence. He establishes himself and Lesbia at the centre of this world, and narrows the scope of it to exclude those whom he perceives to be disruptive, or to pose any kind of potential threat to the rules by which he has established these parameters. He seeks to restructure the context and conditions of the world that he designs for him and Lesbia; both time and desire become immeasurable in Catullus' newly-established construction. The first three lines of poem 5 outline Catullus' two central goals:

> *Vivamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus,*
> *rumoresque senum severiorum*
> *omnes unius aestimemus assis.* (5.1-3)

> Let us live, my Lesbia, and let us love,
> and let us value all the rumours of old men
> at one penny.

Placing Lesbia at the middle of the line gives her primacy, making her equivalent to both life and love (Commager 1964, 362).[75] Catullus then devalues the *senum severiorium*, in effect silencing any concern Lesbia may have about what others may think. Fredricksmeyer (1970, 438), noting the senes' position as traditionally the most censorious and moralising of Roman citizens, argues that *omnes* and *unius* illustrate Catullus' evaluation of them: 'The hissing sibilants of the former line echo the hissing, snarking sounds of the *rumores senum severiorium*; the sibilants of the second line, in which the poet evaluates the *rumores*, emphasise his own disdain for them.'[76] That is, Catullus urges Lesbia to follow his lead and to disregard the traditional Roman world that exists outside of their love, and to focus on the amalgamation of life and love, that is, to surrender agency along with him.

Lines 7 to 9 weave in the idea of limitless love:

> *da mi basia mille, deinde centum,*
> *dein mille altera, dein secunda centum,*
> *deinde usque altera mille, deinde centum.* (5.7-9)
>
> Give me a thousand kisses, then a hundred,
> then another thousand, then a second hundred,
> then even another thousand, then a hundred.

The simplicity of language in the above lines emphasises the raw passion that Catullus seeks to convey (Segal 1968, 287); beyond the urgency of *da* in the first line,

[75] Commager observes that: 'The arrangement of words in the first line… and the double elision effectively make life, loved one, and love itself all compact.'
[76] Henderson (1999, 73) similarly reads *unius* and *omnes* as signaling, '"Us and them". The sides we must choose between. On *their* side is the despised, dead, cash.'

we have no other verbs, and the lines focus solely on conveying the multitude of Catullus' desire. The emphatic movement of the alternating numbers 'propel the number of kisses, love's passion, toward more and more dizzying heights' (Fredricksmeyer 1970, 440), and this 'passion is conceived of as an answer to life's brevity' (Dettmer 1997, 23), in answer to the *nox perpetua* of line 6. This desire not to impose limits on his love for Lesbia is juxtaposed with a need to remove their love from the prying eyes of general society:

> *dein, cum milia multa fecerimus,*
> *conturbabimus illa, ne sciamus,*
> *aut ne quis malus invidere possit,*
> *cum tantum sciat esse basiorum.* (5.10-13)

> Then, when we have made many thousands,
> let us throw out the count, so that we cannot know,
> nor can any malicious person look askance,
> when he knows that our kisses are so many.

Here Catullus emphasises the division between *conturbare* and *scire*. *Scire* is cold rationality, reminiscent of the logical mundaneness of everyday life, whereas *conturbare* is 'the irrationality of passion' (Fredricksmeyer 1970, 441). The process of counting, rather than the process of knowing the final count, is what is important. As Henderson (1999, 74) argues: 'For lyric's *QED* is *non*-knowledge; and the *process* of computation is the end of the discipline, not the results.' Commanger (1964, 362) echoes this sentiment, noting that: 'If a final total of kisses were reached, love would

inevitably be at an end, just as, once the total count of our days is accomplished, life is at an end.' Thus, the urging use of *conturbabimus* brings us back to *vivamus* and *amemus* in the first line: to live is to love without limit.

The other purpose of *conturbare* is to once again return to the idea of excluding others. Fredricksmeyer (1970, 442) argues that, 'By suggesting, at the same time, a defence against this threat, the poet creates the impression of enclosing the poem, the private world of his and Lesbia's love, with a protective ring, as it were, to secure it against the malevolence and the envy of a hostile outside world.' The consequence of excluding the *senes*, and the wider Roman society, is that Catullus has excluded the social hierarchy that those *senes* represent, and thus his own status has gone with it. Within Catullus' redefined world, he has surrendered his powers as a Roman man. Further, by equating Lesbia with life itself, he has placed her in the position of power, and thus has surrendered his patriarchal powers to her.

This idea of limitless love is then picked up in poem 7, when Lesbia asks how many kisses are enough:

> *Quaeris, quot mihi basiationes,*
> *tuae, Lesbia, sint satis superque.* (1-2)
>
> You ask how many kisses from you,
> Lesbia, are enough and more for me.

The answer to this question is similarly limitless. Though this poem has more artifice than 5 (Dettmer 1997, 23), the central premise of the boundlessness of Catullus' love for Lesbia remains the same, as something that cannot and should not be counted.

Indeed, Segal (1968, 294) argues that when Catullus repeats *satis et super* in line 10, it is to 'announce jubilantly the triumph of passion over limit'. The consequence of this 'triumph of passion over limit' is what the *satis et super* is contained within, *vesano Catullo*. As Dettmer (1997, 25) points out, this 'sets the stage for the pain, the anger, and the ambivalence towards Lesbia that is to follow'. By loving Lesbia so entirely, indeed making his life dependent on loving her, Catullus opens himself up to all the negative connotations that go with *vesanus Catullus*. Even within poem 7 itself, the limitless desire of *vesano Catullo* seems at odds with Lesbia's question of *quot basiationes* in the first line. Lesbia's need for quantification seeks to impose a limitation on their desire; she 'assumes the perspective of a meddling outsider, posing herself a version of the *malus* in poem 5' (Young 2015, 78).

Adler (1981, 134) argues that: 'No one asks another "Just how many kisses *do* you want?" unless he is less enthusiastic than the other about the kissing, and it is a question calculated to damp the other's enthusiasm not because the answer is far to seek but because it shows the other that he is *alone* in his passion.' This is our first indication that Lesbia may not be as content inside this insular world as Catullus is. Bertman (1978, 478) argues that the first line ending with *basiationes* and the final line ending with *mala lingua* 'is not an accident, for the only magic potent enough to defeat the *mala lingua* is the magic of the *basiationes* themselves.' If we recall Young's point above that Lesbia herself has become almost synonymous with the *malus* in poem 5, and thus the *mala lingua* in poem 7, then this indicates the opposition between Lesbia (as *mala lingua*) and Catullus (as *basiationes*) that will pervade the rest of the Lesbia poems. Where Catullus presents himself as the desiring and passionate lover (cf. *cupido amanti,* 70.3), passionate and loyal, Lesbia becomes a disease and a destructive force for Catullus (cf. *pestem perniciemque,* 76.20).

Thus, arguably, the biggest problem affecting the stability of Catullus' insular environment is Lesbia herself. While Catullus has deftly and purposefully removed their relationship from social constraints, he cannot physically remove Lesbia from Roman society itself. The fact remains that these two realities – Catullus' constructed reality, and the contemporary Rome that he and Lesbia live within – run parallel, and one bleeds into the other unless tightly controlled. When Lesbia begins to rupture Catullus' idealised world, Catullus is forced to begin reintroducing the Roman values that he had previously counted as worthless. This is done not necessarily to try and control Lesbia, as Catullus becomes increasingly aware that he cannot change her (*non iam illud quaero, contra ut me diligat illa, aut, quod non potis est, esse pudica velit*/ now I do not ask that she love me as I love her, or, what is impossible, that she be chaste, 76.23-24), but rather to try to reassert his power as a Roman man. Catullus has already surrendered control to both Lesbia herself, and his love for Lesbia, so this reassertion comes predominantly through juxtaposing his own loyalty (*fides*) with Lesbia's betrayals and faults (*culpa*).

Thus, in poem 11, which is one of the first poems where we see this juxtaposition of loyalty and betrayal, Catullus focuses on the loyalty and fidelity of Furius and Aurelius, before then attacking Lesbia for her infidelity:

Cum suis vivat valeatque moechis,
quos simul complexa tenet trecentos,
nullum amans vere, sed identidem omnium
ilia rumpens;
nec meum respectet, ut ante, amorem,
qui illius culpa cecidit velut prati

ultimi flos, praetereunte postquam

tactus aratro est. (11.17-24)

Let her live and be well with her lovers,
whom she holds, grasping three hundred at once,
truly loving none, but breaking them asunder
over and over;

Do not let her look for my love, as she did before,
which, because of her fault, has been cut down,
like a flower, the meadow's last,
after a passing plough touches it.

Catullus introduces a definite contemporary context to this poem: it is not set within Rome itself, but he traverses the boundaries of Rome's territory, and discusses the *monimenta magni Caesaris*, thus bringing a definite sense of time to the poem (Ross 1969, 98). This journey, though, has an unreal element to it, and thus poem 11 serves as almost a transitional poem, with a sense of odyssey (Scott 1983, 40), where Catullus slowly begins to reintroduce his poems into a Roman setting. Thus, when he turns to Lesbia's adultery at the end of the poem, it is contextualised within the boundaries of Rome. Similarly, just as Catullus juxtaposes the fidelity of his friends against the infidelity of Lesbia, so too does he contrast the fantastical journey in the first part of the poem with the gritty realism of its conclusion (Armstrong 2013, 50).[77]

[77] Armstrong observes that 'wanderlust transmutes into simple, voracious lust'.

Lesbia has breached Catullus' exclusionary world, and it is thus very much within Rome itself that Catullus has been mown down.

Though the explicit sexual violence comes only at the end of the poem, Catullus employs Caesar as an exemplar of physical aggression, and that aggression gains momentum as the poem continues, moving closer and closer to Rome, and closer to Lesbia.[78] As Forsyth (1991, 462) notes: '[Catullus] begins to shift his attention from the outer macrocosm to the inner macrocosm, from the imagined rape of exotic foreigners to his own very real rape by Lesbia.' Lesbia, like Caesar, is an unstoppable invading force, against whom Catullus finds himself powerless.[79] The use of *identidem* in line 19 makes a clear link between poem 11 (*identidem omnium*) and poem 51 (*identidem te,* 51.3). The link highlights the different kinds of powerlessness that Catullus experiences: on the one hand, rendered powerless at the mere sight of Lesbia; on the other, powerless to stop her destruction of Catullus' love (Bright 1976, 115).

This poem thus illustrates the central masochistic tropes that we have seen with Justine and Encolpius. Catullus, as the delicate *flos*, has been mown down by the destructive plough; he has been rendered powerless by Lesbia, and by the loss of his own patriarchal agency. Secondly, Catullus begins to shift responsibility for his situation onto Lesbia. In line 17 Catullus uses *cum suis moechis* to describe Lesbia with her three hundred lovers. As Bright (1976, 110) observes, this 'shows the

[78] Scott (1983, 41) argues that 'Catullus drew on the fluid tradition concerning Scylla to shape the imagery and invective of his message for Lesbia. His picture deftly combines throughout the primordial, epic beast and the later, sexually wanton woman.'

[79] Miller (2002, 428-429) observes that: 'Poem 11 is all about power, whether Lesbia's over Catullus, Caesar's over the world, Roman ideology's power to dictate masculine and feminine sexual roles, or Catullus' power rhetorically to frame and caricature Lesbia by inverting those sexual norms, so that Lesbia becomes the voracious monster and Catullus the passive flower.' This power to emphasise and demonise Lesbia's behaviour is one of the few that Catullus possesses, so that through the course of the poems Lesbia takes on an increasingly negative persona. This is something that I will examine further in section two, when analysing the effect that Catullus' perception and portrayal of Lesbia has over the narrative.

myopia we should expect from Catullus (or from the elegiac tradition): anyone else, of course, is *moechus*. He, of course, is not.' Seeing himself as superior to Lesbia is essential to the way that Catullus perceives and rationalises their relationship. He is her victim, because he is morally superior, and thus defenceless against her inconstancy. Similarly, Justine saw herself as morally superior to the libertines, despite being their constant victim. Both Justine and Catullus take solace in their perceived superiority.

This degradation of Lesbia is picked up again in poem 58, where Lesbia's betrayal is placed squarely within Rome:

> *Caeli, Lesbia nostra, Lesbia illa,*
> *illa Lesbia, quam Catullus unam*
> *plus quam se atque suos amavit omnes,*
> *nunc in quadriviis et angiportis*
> *glubit magnanimi Remi nepotes.*
>
> Caelius, our Lesbia, that Lesbia,
> that Lesbia, whom alone Catullus
> loved more than himself and all his own,
> now in the crossroads and back alleys of Rome,
> jacks off the grandsons of great Remus.

There is a certain furtiveness to the location here, expressed in terms of crossroads and back alleys, but this relates more to Lesbia's underhanded behaviour, rather than deliberate obfuscation on Catullus' part. Thus, Catullus is slowly integrating Roman

themes and locales into his relationship with Lesbia, moving it out of this isolated and private setting and very much into his own contemporary society. Poem 58, though compact, conveys an extraordinary amount of feeling. As Bright (1976, 106) notes: 'The fact that the poem is addressed to Caelius should be a warning… But we are distracted, indeed overwhelmed, by the melodic repetition of the magic name, and instinctively build a concept of the relationship being developed.' This poem follows a formula that is similar to some of the later Lesbia poems, where Catullus initially draws the reader in, focusing on his love for Lesbia, and his fidelity, before then rapidly switching focus to Lesbia's faults.

Catullus unam plus quam se atque suos amavit omnes draws attention once again to the uniqueness of Catullus' love, how superior and unparalleled it is. The mantra-like use of Lesbia's name makes the focus of the poem undoubtable: Lesbia is inescapable. It sets up a false expectation, using a 'touching *geminatio* of Lesbia's name' (Richlin 1992, 152), before 'The fourth line brings her down to the backstreets of Rome, and the final one flashes love, hatred, sickness' (Lateiner 1977, 17). Catullus has returned to where he began: within Rome, watching on (figuratively) as Lesbia occupies the attention of another man (or men). Lesbia's actions in poem 51, as Catullus observed her (*dulce ridentem*, 51.5), have been exchanged for the coarser *glubit*, conveying Catullus' anger and cynicism. Placing both the *magnanimi Remi nepotes* and Lesbia *in quadriviis et angiportis* mounts a moral attack on both Lesbia and Rome (Muse 2009, 302). Thus, here Catullus rebels against both Lesbia, for disrupting their insular world, and Rome, for penetrating their insular world. Catullus uses poem 58 to express his frustration with the situation that he has created, but places the blame for that on two external sources.

Thus, as we have seen, the theme of responsibility develops far more intensity and intricacy within Catullus than it did in the *Satyricon*, as a by-product of the disintegration of his relationship with Lesbia. Rather than admit or accept that he has willingly entered the relationship, allowed himself to be controlled and has not left of his own volition, Catullus places all blame for the decline of their relationship on Lesbia, and Catullus willingly embraces his victimisation insofar as it releases him from that responsibility. Passivity also plays out somewhat differently: Catullus displays passivity, but he is very much aware of his own inertia. He tries to counter this stasis by attacking Lesbia, reproaching her for her lack of *fides*. This chapter's exploration of Catullus' masochistic qualities highlights some of the elements that affect Catullus' narration. My analysis in this chapter has focused on Catullus' perspective alone, and the next Catullan chapter will broaden the examination and consider the effect that Catullus' masochistic perception has on the narrative, when the reader only has Catullus' voice with which to contend.

Thyestes: paranoia, delusion, and masochistic appetite

This chapter demonstrates Thyestes' masochistic qualities, which I draw out through analysing the inherent characteristics of Atreus and Thyestes. My central focus is the many ways in which the brothers are mirror images of each other, but that Atreus emerges as a far more successful character: his proactive aggression easily defeats Thyestes' vacillating masochism. Ultimately, Thyestes returns home because he desires the power and wealth that awaits him. Despite it being clear that he does not trust Atreus, and fears what may await him, Thyestes returns home. I argue that it is masochistic delusion that allows this to happen, and which facilitates the deliberate passivity that Thyestes exhibits. Thyestes' masochism means that he is not alert or on guard, and thus he is easily manipulated by Atreus. Atreus is irresistible: as the 'new Tantalus' (Boyle 1997, 44), the reader is drawn into Atreus' world, where he is *auctor*. Rules, rites, and societal order are defined by Atreus alone; even the gods are excluded from this world of Atreus' own making (*dimitto superos; summa votorum attigi*, 888). Thyestes' lack of proactivity and awareness make him an ideal victim for Atreus' machinations. An examination of the two brothers' inherent characteristics, and their decision-making processes, reveals Thyestes' masochism, and illustrates how Atreus exploits Thyestes' weaknesses to achieve his victory. My analysis thus begins with Atreus, and demonstrates how Thyestes' masochism stands in stark contrast to Atreus' power.

Atreus' opening soliloquy illustrates his frustrated anger. He is *inultus* (178), a mere *iratus Atreus* (180).[80] His need to take revenge on Thyestes prompts a crescendo of statements on what lengths he will go to in order to have his revenge (180-189), culminating in *haec ipsa pollens incliti Pelopis domus ruat vel in me, dummodo in fratrem ruat* (this powerful palace itself, celebrated Pelops' house, may it fall on me, as long as it falls on my brother, 190-191). Atreus' fury coalesces with his paranoia: as he plots against Thyestes, he worries that Thyestes is plotting against him in return (*aut perdet aut peribit; in medio est scelus positum occupant*/ kill or be killed; between us is the crime for whoever first attempts it, 203-204).

Bak (1995, 182) identifies that precipitating experiences to paranoia are 'particularly emphasised injuries to the ego, such as slights, frustrated ambitions, injustices.' Atreus outlines what Thyestes has done to him from line 220 onwards, culminating in these consequences for Atreus:

> *Per regna trepidus exul erravi mea,*
> *pars nulla generis tuta ab insidiis vacat,*
> *corrupta coniunx, imperi quassa est fides,*
> *domus aegra, dubius sanguis est – certi nihil*
> *nisi frater hostis.* (237-241)
>
> As a restless exile, I wandered through my kingdom,

[80] Braden (1985, 42) notes that even in this statement, we see the determination and the purpose that Atreus possesses: 'Indeed, part of what he sets before himself – like Nero and Medea – is his own name; the phrase *iratus Atreus* is offered as a reproach, but it resonates in its isolation as something a bit more impressive: a play title, maybe, like *Hercules Furens*.' This line is an early indication of the way that Atreus summons his own power to rouse himself to action. Fitch & McElduff (2002, 25) note that: 'It is worth adding that, since *iratus* is almost an anagram of *Atreus*, the phrase implies that anger is built into his role.' I will expand on the notion of Atreus as the personification of *furor* later in this chapter.

no part of my family safe and free from snares,
my wife corrupted, the trust of my empire broken,
my home diseased, my bloodline doubtful –
nothing certain except my brother's enmity.

This makes clear exactly what it is that Atreus feels Thyestes has taken from him, and what he aims to regain through this plot: his kingship, his masculinity, and his paternal role. Even though Atreus already has these things, he does not feel that they will be truly affirmed until he has shown himself superior to Thyestes, until he has caused him this same emptiness and uncertainty. Accordingly, Atreus is able to couple this experience with his own specific knowledge of Thyestes, in order to anticipate what Thyestes will do:

S: Iam tempus illi fecit aerumnas leves.

A: Erras; malorum sensus accrescit die.
Leve est miserias ferre, perferre est grave. (305-7)

S: By now time has made his troubles light.

A: Wrong; a sense of injustice grows by day.
It is easy to bear misfortune; to continue to do so is a burden.

Again, this passage echoes Atreus' own mindset. He uses this hyper-awareness of his own situation to predict Thyestes' actions. He knows that Thyestes will not be able to

resist his invitation, partly because he believes him to be power-hungry, and partly because Atreus believes that were their roles reversed, he would not be able to resist (Rose 1986, 120).[81] In order to explore how Atreus' hyper-awareness is integral to his success, I examine Atreus' viewpoint, as evinced in his conversation with the *satelles*, and how he confronts his own doubts and concerns in order to sure up his plan.

There are certainly points of commonality in the behaviour of Atreus and Sadean sadists. As we have seen, conviction and preparation are essential to both the ethos and the success of a Sadean sadist. They determine their desires, calculate the most logical and efficient way to achieve their desires, identify any possible problems and how to overcome them; and, finally, they have both the belief and determination to attain their desires (Henaff 1999, 281). Control and logic become essential in the planning phase, as well as a particularly psychological awareness. This means that even though they may not adhere to the same moral system, a Sadean sadist must be able to anticipate someone else's actions, so they can adapt their plan to not only overcome this, but also take advantage of it. We saw this with the game of "cut-the-cord" that Roland played with Justine, where he anticipated that Justine would cut him down before he died, and used this to maximise his own pleasure.

Much as a Sadean sadist sees their actions as rational because they are pleasurable for them – eschewing entirely the viewpoint of their victim or an external cultural viewpoint (Bataille 1986, 171)[82] – so does Atreus see his own actions in *Thyestes*. The conversation with the *satelles* sets out Atreus' views on morality and kingship, and this sets up the tone for Atreus' behaviour throughout the whole play.

[81] Rose argues that: 'Consumed as he is by *regni furor*, he assumes that Thyestes is similarly motivated (302), and so he devises the scheme for luring him to punishment by inviting him to exchange the worst state for the better.'

[82] Bataille observes that the Sadean ethos reflects the idea that 'the man who admits the value of other people necessarily imposes limits upon himself. Respect for others hinders him and prevents him from measuring the fullest extent of his desire.'

That is, by appreciating the viewpoint that Atreus sets up at the beginning of the play, the reader can appreciate the consistency of his behaviour throughout. This does not mean that a reader or viewer cannot appreciate his behaviour as reprehensible, but, like with Sade's sadists, can also recognise that to Atreus it is both logical and rational, employing what Mader (2002, 245) defines as 'self-reflexive logic'.

Atreus displaces a 'conventional' moral system and replaces it with his own regime, which helps him achieve his ultimate goal of taking revenge on Thyestes. Much about Atreus' motivations and beliefs can be appreciated from examining his conversation with the *satelles*, where he outlines his viewpoint and his need to take revenge on Thyestes.[83] The *satelles* provides the counterpoint to Atreus, which serves to only strengthen Atreus' confidence in his own philosophy (Giancotti 1953, 104),[84] similarly to the way the philosophies of Sadean sadists were only strengthened by Justine's Catholicism-based arguments against them. Atreus considers autocratic and tyrannical power as the only worthwhile kind of power, epitomised in '*quod nolunt velint'* (212):

> *Satelles: Fama te populi nihil*
> *adversa terret?*
>
> *Atreus: Maximum hoc regni bonum est,*
> *quod facta domini cogitur populis sui*

[83] This scene is a common type of Senecan *Affektszene*, reminiscent of the *domina-nutrix* scenes in *Medea* (116-178; 380-430); *Phaedra* (85-273); and *Agamemnon* (108-225). As Mader (1998, 25) observes: 'These scenes, placed immediately after the first choral ode, show broad similarities in structure and conception: ablaze with love or hate, the *domina* meditates bloody vengeance; a *nutrix* intervenes to urge moderation, but fails to deflect her mistress from her nefarious course.' For further discussion of this, see Tarrant (1985, 116) and Heldmann (1974, 108-164).

[84] Giancotti observes that 'Lo accompagna una guardia la cui funzione consiste nel far risaltare l'indole e i disegni di lui'. Mader (1998, 31-33) also points out that 'a major function of these scenes… is to dramatise the duel between *furor* and *mens bona*.'

tam ferre quam laudare.

S: Quos cogit metus
laudare, eosdem reddit inimicos metus.
at qui favoris gloriam veri petit,
animo magis quam voce laudari volet.

A: Laus vera humili saepe contigit viro,
non nisi potenti falsa. Quod nolunt velint. (204-212)

S: Does adverse public opinion not deter you?

A: This is the greatest virtue of kingship: that which is thought as kingly deeds, the people themselves must bear and even praise.

S: Those whom fear compels to praise, so fear returns them as foes. But he who seeks the glory of true favour will want to be praised in spirit more than in voice.

A: True praise is attained even by the lowly man; false comes only to the strong. Let them want what they do not want. (204-212)

The ideas expressed in *quod nolunt velint* become emblematic of Atreus' intentions throughout the entire play. As Mader (1998, 37) argues: 'Atreus savours the essence of true power – a *libido dominandi* which defines itself not one-dimensionally in

relation to physical coercion, but more sadistically as the despot's control over the subjects' visible responses, and so over their wills.' Not only is this how Atreus wants to rule – and feels he must rule – but this is what he wants to do to Thyestes: to physically coerce Thyestes into doing something irredeemably horrible (*aliquod audendum est nefas atrox, cruentum*… 193-194).[85]

This conversation with the *satelles* is a clash of two opposing belief systems and the ideas of rational and irrational action that flow from them. The *satelles* is promoting the idealised *bonus rex*, who acts with appropriate *clementia* and earns the favour of his subjects through his tempered behaviour (Rose 1986, 119). For Atreus, this kind of behaviour is unnecessary and counter-productive, when he can simply inspire the people to tolerate and accept his behaviour through exercising fear and tyrannical power.[86] Atreus' rationale here can be read alongside Seneca's *De Clementia*, where Seneca warns Nero, *inter alia*, of the dangers of ruling through fear and hatred:[87]

> *Contrariis in contraria agitur; nam cum invisus sit, quia timetur, timeri vult, quia invisus est, et illo exsecrabili versu,*

[85] Like Fitch & McElduff (2002, 25) observed that *iratus* is linguistically and figuratively equated with Atreus, so too does Boyle (2017, 178) equate *atrox* with Atreus: 'It [*atrox*] occurs only four times in the tragedies, including twice in this play (also at 745), where it seems alliteratively suggestive of Atreus, as if *atrox* meant 'Atrean'. This is a compelling point, and adds to the way that Seneca connects Atreus with words that symbolise power and control. Not only does Atreus overpower Thyestes psychologically, but it is as if he brings language itself under his own control and purview.

[86] Braden (1970, 12) observes that in *De Clementia* Seneca makes a clear distinction between *clementia* and *misericordia*, because '*clementia* alone confirms the power of its bestower: pardon is a royal prerogative, and its exercise displays royalty.' As Braden observes, Atreus provides the counterargument to this in *Thyestes*, arguing that false praise comes only to the strong and powerful. Korfmacher (1946, 52) reads the distinction between *clementia* and *misericordia* in *De Clementia* as paying service to traditional Stoic *apatheia*: 'whereby he pronounced *clementia* a virtue but made a vice of its alleged opposite *misericordia* (a subdivision of *aegritudo*), illustrating his point by the statement that *clementia* is to *religio* (genuine piety) as *misericordia* is to *superstitio* (debased superstition).' To Atreus, both *clementia* and *misericordia* are signs of weakness, compared to ruling through fear alone. I will return to the notion of Stoic *apatheia* in the second Seneca chapter, when examining Thyestes' veneer of Stoicism.

[87] For further discussion of *De Clementia* and Atrean inversion, see Lefevre (1985, 1266-1267); Tarrant (1985, 121; p. 176); Boyle (2017, 187).

> *qui multos praecipites dedit, utitur: 'oderint, dum metuant' ignarus, quanta rabies oriatur, ubi supra modum odia creverunt* (204-212).
>
> Conflicting causes force him to conflicting courses; for when he is hated because he is feared, he wants to be feared because he is hated; and, ignorant of how much rage is stirred, when enmity grows to such an extent, he takes that accursed line, which drives many headlong falls, 'Let them hate, so long as they fear'.[88]

One can infer that within this philosophy that Seneca proposes, ruling through fear and hate is an irrational course; conversely, ruling with judiciousness and mercy is clearly sensible and thus rational. Atreus' philosophy, however, is entirely different: what Seneca defines in *De Clementia* as a vice, that is, being a tyrannical and avaricious ruler, Atreus sees as a virtue, because he firmly believes this will bring him success, much as Seneca believes and proposes the opposite in *De Clementia* (Davis 2003, 70).[89] Atreus has unshakeable faith in his philosophy, and is thus fully

[88] *'Quod nolunt velint'*, of course, finds its roots in Accius' Atreus' '*oderint dum metuant*' (let them hate, so long as they fear), which was picked up by various later Romans: Cicero (*Cat.* 1.13); Caligula (Suet. *Gai*. 30.1); Seneca himself, as above, and in *De Ira* (1.20.4); and *Octavia'*s Nero (457), *inter alia.*

[89] Davis points out that: 'we find that… the Minister consistently advances positions adopted by Seneca himself in *On Mercy* and that Atreus, with equal consistency, rejects them… he [the Minister] seems to think that, like the good ruler depicted in *On Mercy,* Atreus will long for the citizens to approve his commands. In fact, Atreus despises the people and their approbation (205-7).' The people only have meaning to Atreus insofar as they are a symbol of his power; their desires and wants have no meaning to him, in the same way that the victims of Sadean sadists only have meaning inasmuch as they exist to facilitate their pleasure.

committed to it (Rose 1986, 122);[90] all his actions are guided and motivated by it, which is integral to his success.

Beyond his commitment to his philosophy, a key element to Atreus' characterisation is his need to not only punish Thyestes, but to take pleasure in the act of punishment:

> *De fine poenae loqueris; ego poenam volo.*
> *Perimat tyrannus lenis; in regno meo*
> *mors impetratur.* (246-248)
>
> You speak of the end of punishment; I want punishment itself.
> Let the mild king murder; death is begged for in my kingdom.

Atreus wants Thyestes to suffer, and to see Thyestes bring about his own downfall. There is certainly a bestial streak to Atreus' desire (Boyle 1997, 46): it is not enough to do something *to* Thyestes; Thyestes must play a primary role in his own suffering (*quod est in isto scelere praecipuum nefas, hoc ipse faciet*/what is the principal sin in this crime, he himself shall do, 285-286). Atreus uses his own experience of exile to predict Thyestes' actions. Atreus sees Thyestes as possessing certain characteristics: he is power-hungry, tyrannical, violent and bestial; all qualities which Atreus himself possesses:

> *Aliquod audendum est nefas*

[90] Rose argues that: 'Atreus craves absolute control for its own sake over an unwilling populace. No cost is too high for the preservation of this autocratic power.' We can refer back here to Atreus' earlier point of *haec ipsa pollens incliti Pelopis domus ruat vel in me, dummodo in fratrem ruat* (190-191). Giancotti (1953, 106) likewise observes: 'ché egli è uomo il quale ha il coraggio delle proprie opinion.'

atrox, cruentum, tale quod frater meus

suum esse mallet. (193-195)

Some atrocious crime must be boldly ventured,

cruel, such which my brother would prefer to be his.

Atreus thus understands and perceives Thyestes as a mirror image of himself[91] – though an inferior image, of course – which means he is uniquely placed to defeat Thyestes, knowing that he must trap Thyestes as he would trap himself. This motivates his decision to kill Thyestes' children (because Atreus knows that is his own – if not his only – vulnerability), and in turn inspires his plan to lure Thyestes back from exile with the promise of shared kingship (because Atreus knows he himself could not resist the opportunity for power). Atreus sees his actions as simply 'getting in first' (*non poterat capi, nisi capere vellet. regna nunc sperat mea…/* he would not be able to be caught, unless he wanted to catch. Even now he hopes for my kingdom… 288-299).

That is, Atreus is taking revenge on Thyestes before Thyestes has another chance to overthrow him; thus, Atreus legitimises his actions by seeing it as simply proactive action, which – if terrible enough – will ultimately rob Thyestes of the opportunity to retaliate, and thus will establish and solidify Atreus' despotic power (Giancotti 1953, 105-106). Atreus' astuteness is also illustrated by the way in which he considers and dismisses certain courses of action, ultimately making choices that are motivated by reason and that will give him the least variables, rather than choices

[91] Davis notes that 'Atreus views Thyestes as possessing the same criminality that he does. He also, claims Atreus, possesses the same desire for power (288f.).' Thyestes' past behaviour leads Atreus to this conclusion, and there is nothing that happens upon Thyestes' return that persuades Atreus away from this view.

motivated by emotions. For example, when the *satelles* asks Atreus whether he plans to involve Agamemnon and Menelaus in his plot (317), initially Atreus states that they are too young to carry out such a ruse successfully (318-319), and also that he does not wish them to bear any guilt or responsibility (*Ut ipsi crimine et culpa vacent,* 321). He then reconsiders and decides that such assistance will prove their parentage one way or the other: should they assist him, then clearly they are his sons; should they plead Thyestes' case, then they have betrayed Atreus and his worst fears (paranoia) will be confirmed – *si patruum vocant, pater est*, (329-330). Atreus then reconsiders once more, appreciating that such a burden would place undue stress and responsibility on his sons, meaning that they may unwittingly derail his plan, deciding finally that they shall play an ignorant and blameless role (330-333).[92]

Atreus also exhibits psychological strength by recognising that occasionally he is going to experience doubts or misgivings about his chosen course of action. Given that these doubts are counterintuitive to Atreus' ultimate purpose, they can be deemed as irrational, or unhelpful emotions. Rather than trying to suppress these doubts, he addresses them and rationalises them. As Bersani (1989, 103) observes: 'Paranoia is a necessary and desired structure of thought', insofar as it can make an individual alert and aware of specific concerns that need to be addressed. On this point, Schiesaro (2009, 221) observes that '…an unwillingness, or inability, fully to engage with the irrational dimension of the self, even as its existence is clearly perceived, ultimately results in a mutilation, if not an outright denial, of the self.' That is, characters who

[92] Tarrant (1985, 135) notes: 'The speech does not advance the action, but fills out the portrait of Atreus by showing him rooting out the last vestiges of respect for goodness.' I agree to a point with this argument, certainly insofar as it fills out the portrait of Atreus. It develops the epicentre of Atreus' concern: his children. In doing so, it reveals and solidifies the nexus of Atreus' hated for Thyestes, and the reason for his particular brand of revenge. Schiesaro (2003, 157) observes that Atreus draws on his own experience to rationalise the decision not to tell them: 'Atreus… carefully considers the reliability of his own sons as possible accomplices in the execution of the plot, and bases his judgement, once again, on actual experience: 'the art of silence is taught by life's many ills' (318: *tacere multis discitur vitae malis*).'

can recognise desires stemming from irrational and passionate emotions and reactions, such as anger or lust, but cannot embrace these emotions, undergo more psychological trauma through this act of suppression, and, furthermore, are less likely to successful achieve their desire.

This act of suppression is in line with Bak's theory on paranoia, where the paranoia, and its accompanying sadistic fantasies, will be suppressed by the masochist, and is thus tantamount to masochistic delusion (Bak 1995, 191). One of Atreus' strengths is that he not only full embraces his anger and fury, but uses these emotions as a logical mechanism for dealing with other less helpful emotions:

> *...anime, quid rursus times*
> *et ante rem subsidis? audendum est, age!*
> *quod est in isto scelere praecipuum nefas,*
> *hoc ipse faciet.* (283-286)
>
> Spirit, why do you fear, turn back and halt before the deed?
> Be bold, begin!
> What is the principal sin in this crime, he himself shall do.

Atreus recognises his doubt and addresses it. He summons his courage, which is inspired by his anger and rage, and refocuses on Thyestes, reminding himself of the central purpose for considering his plan in the first place. Atreus thus exerts control through a complete awareness of all his emotions.[93]

[93] In this regard, Bersani (1989, 100) notes that embracing, rationalising, and surpassing the paranoid stage 'allows the original masochistic wish to become conscious by creating the conditions in which it can be reformulated as a triumphant narcissism.' Arguably, narcissistic is too mild a description for Atreus, but he certainly does transform any semblance of masochistic paranoia into an ultimate triumph.

Schiesaro's point on irrationality, and Bak's on paranoia, are integral to demonstrating and understanding Thyestes' masochism. Atreus' psychological cognisance contrasts markedly with Thyestes' lack of awareness, which manifests primarily in his inability to unite thought and action, and to consider his plans thoroughly before executing them. Seneca illustrates Thyestes' imprudence by highlighting his physical unwillingness:

> *Modo inter illa, quae putant cuncti aspera*
> *fortis fui laetusque; nunc contra in metus*
> *revolvor; animus haeret ac retro cupit*
> *corpus referre, moveo nolentem gradum.* (417-420)

> Recently, amongst such fortune, which all count as adverse, I was strong and joyful; now, in opposition, I am returning into fears;
> my spirit is stalled and, my body desiring to turn back,
> I move unwilling step along.

Here Thyestes acknowledges his physical trepidation, yet allows himself to be persuaded by Tantalus to return home to Atreus (421-490).[94] Despite being conscious of the unlikelihood of a conciliatory reunion with Atreus, Thyestes suppresses his doubts and allows himself to be led, as he tells Tantalus '*ego vos sequor, non duco'* (489). Thyestes' inability to assert his authority here, and his unusual decision to follow rather than to lead, recalls his ancestor Tantalus' capitulation to the Fury (*sequor*, 100) in the prologue (Boyle 1997, 44).

[94] Giancotti (1953, 103) argues that firstly Tantalus and then Thyestes are persuaded by the mirage of power that the palace represents.

Tantalus' interaction with the Fury frames the action of the play, and illustrates a key difference between Tantalus' situation and Thyestes'. The Fury appears as both the instigator and the stage manager of the drama (Schiesaro 2003, 38-39). The power of the Fury's language commands and outlines the themes that will dominate the entire play:

> *Ante perturba domum*
> *inferque tecum proelia et ferri malum*
> *regibus amorem, concute insano ferum*
> *pectus tumultu.* (83 – 86)
>
> First throw your house into disorder,
> bear strife with you and a love of the sword,
> evil to kings, compel this wild heart with mad turmoil.

It is the Fury who demands the action of the play, who determines the tumult that is to come. There is no mystery to what she desires: *libido victrix* (46); *Thracium fiat nefas maiore numero* (56-56); *hunc furorem divide in totam domum* (101). Indeed, the Fury's proclamation of *Thracium fiat nefas maiore numero* highlights the central ideas of *nefas* and *scelus* within the play (Rose 1986, 118), and also the idea of moral inversion: *nolo* for *volo*, *nefas* for *fas*, *scelus* for *fides*, and *ira* for *ratio* (Schiesaro 2003, 39). Tantalus tries to resist the insistent Fury (*stabo et arcebo scelus,* 95), but is quickly overcome (96-100). Here the Fury's speech and action overpowers Tantalus' attempt at silent inertia. The final word in this capitulation, *sequor*, as already discussed, anticipates Thyestes' *ego vos sequor, non duco* (489), which casts both

Tantalus and Thyestes as powerless: they do not act, but follow.[95] The Fury and Atreus control the action of the play, while Tantalus and Thyestes are left to be drawn into the drama and controlled by the two.

The central difference between Tantalus and Thyestes is choice (agency). As Schiesaro (2003, 149) points out: 'Tantalus was tortured and in fact had no means to escape from an overwhelming supernatural entity. Thyestes had been engaged in a dialectic exchange with his son that could easily leave room for retreating. The tragic-sounding acceptance of what appears to be an inevitable destiny is totally disproportionate to the situation.' Unlike Tantalus, Thyestes should not be at the mercy of his son; rather, Thyestes should be able to exert his will over Tantalus, but chooses instead to follow, rather than lead. This kind of passivity is indicative of Thyestes' masochistic persona. By choosing to be passive, and surrendering his agency as the *pater familias*, Thyestes is giving responsibility to Tantalus, and thus absolving himself of responsibility for what may happen when they return to Argos. It also makes clear why Thyestes ultimately will be no match for Atreus: his lack of proactivity and his desire to follow mark him as psychologically and linguistically inferior to Atreus. It also betrays Thyestes' inner desire, which is in opposition to his outwardly Stoic musings: ultimately, Thyestes wants to return to his former royal life and all the trappings of it, but is unwilling to take responsibility for his desires.

Thyestes defines his doubts as irrational, but arguably it is his masochistic delusion that makes his behaviour irrational. His constant attempts to reassure himself

[95] Davis (2003, 43) notes the similarity between Tantalus and Thyestes: 'The stage action, the dragging of the ghost onstage, his attempt to flee, his blocking of the entrance into the house and his scourging, underline a point which should be clear from Tantalus' own words: the ghost is a reluctant polluter of his house. He resists the Fury's commands and, initially at least, has to be compelled to obey. In the end, however, Tantalus yields to his instincts (97-100) and infects the house… Thyestes also professes reluctance, but he too is overcome by innate disposition.' Tantalus, in a sense, represents the combined image of the two brothers: his crime inspires Atreus, and his unwillingness and passivity reflects Thyestes.

of his faith in his brother (*credula praesta pectora fratri,* 962-3) are his way of convincing himself that his doubts are irrational. In reality, it is the act of denying them that makes them irrational, and defines him as psychologically inferior to Atreus. It is in observing Thyestes' actions and decisions that Atreus' psychological astuteness is made clear. Taken concomitantly, the two brothers have the same information available to them, and yet use this information in markedly different ways. They grew up together; have betrayed each other; and each fulfilled the current role of the other at various times (leader and exile). In part, Thyestes is lured in by the possibility of freedom, forgiveness, and luxury, but ultimately tries to continually quash his doubts of Atreus' genuineness without due consideration (Boyle 1997, 49). Given the sequence of the play, the reader is aware of Atreus' plans before Thyestes first appears, already worrying about what fate may await him, and knows that Thyestes is right to worry. Even if this were not so, Thyestes' own words, when he is trying to quash his fears, betray how unlikely his hopes for reconciliation are:

> *Amat Thyesten frater? aetherias prius*
> *perfundet Arctos pontus et Siculi rapax*
> *consistet aestus unda et Ionio seges*
> *matura pelago surget et lucem dabit*
> *nox atra terris, ante cum flammis aquae,*
> *cum morte vita, cum mari ventus fidem*
> *foedusque iungent.* (476-482)

> His brother love Thyestes? First the sea will drench the
> celestial Bears, and the furious waves of the Sicilian

tide stand still, and ripe fields grow in the Ionian Sea,

and black night will give light to earth,

before water joins fire, life with death,

and wind with sea in confidence and contract.

Despite the apocalyptic force of this statement, Thyestes quickly tries to quash this worry. He does not thoroughly contemplate his fears, or rationalise them, as Atreus does; rather, he tries to suppress them, and accordingly loses control of his own fate (Rose 1986, 127).[96] They continually reappear and he continually tries to ignore them, until they physically manifest in the penultimate scenes of the play. There are certainly similarities between the way that masochism manifests in Encolpius and Thyestes. Encolpius allows himself to be steered about from place to place: his movement and direction is nearly always decided upon by somebody else, and he follows without assenting or protesting. Thyestes allows Tantalus to lead him home to Atreus, and then he allows Atreus to dictate his actions when he returns home. The central difference between the two is the motivation for their passivity: Encolpius becomes passive when he becomes overwhelmed; Thyestes retreats into passivity because he does not want to make a decision. Thyestes tries to sustain an image of himself that is free from worldly desires, but ultimately he is ruled by those desires. His paranoia arises because he fears that Atreus will trap him before he can reclaim his riches, and his desire for the riches leads him into masochistic delusion. It is an almost simultaneous process, contingent entirely on the risks Thyestes is willing to take to regain the throne.

[96] Rose argues that: 'The verbal connections [e.g. Thyestes' repeated use of *nolo*] suggest that he acts as he does because he cannot resist his brother's will. Thyestes' loss of control vividly represents Atreus' growing control over him.'

Bersani (1989, 102) notes that paranoia often materialises at the intersection of desire and fear: 'Paranoia repeats phenomena as design. What you thought was a chance juxtaposition may turn out to be a deliberate coupling. If that possibility inspires panic, it is also desired.' There is no doubt that Thyestes illustrates panic: phrases like *'Causam timoris ipse quam ignoro exigis'* (You demand the cause of my fear, which I do not know, 434), and it is the struggle between his fear and desire that causes Thyestes' unwilling step. Ultimately, it is desire that wins out, when Thyestes' capitulates with little resistance to Tantalus' persuasion.

One could not say that Tantalus puts up a compelling argument, certainly no more compelling than that which has passed between the two before that. Tantalus asks what power Atreus has against Thyestes (484), at which point Thyestes replies that it is because of his sons that he fears Atreus (485-486), which cannot be the truth, or at least the complete truth, given that if that were the sole reason then Thyestes would not have led them into danger in the first place. Tantalus then asks if he fears to be caught if he is on his guard (*Decipi cautus times*? 486), at which Thyestes agrees to follow. There is nothing convincing or particularly cogent about Tantalus' words: Thyestes follows because ultimately his desire wins out, and his longing for the throne proves irresistible.

There is one final element of Thyestes' masochism to consider, which is the guilt complex. Nacht (1995, 32) discusses the guilt complex in masochists as an inward turn of aggression: 'Psychoanalytic studies have shown that masochism is derived from the aggressive forces by a turning round of these against the subject. This mechanism brings into play the guilt complex and its result: the need to be punished.' Nacht (1997, 20 ff.) acknowledges that the expression 'guilt complex' is not an all-encompassing or clear concept, which in part is because guilt is often

processed subconsciously by the superego, as I mentioned in the introduction. Thyestes' awareness of Atreus' hatred for him – despite his attempts to quash his doubts – suggests that he is aware to some degree of his own wrongdoing. His conversation with Tantalus does not betray any guilt or feeling of responsibility for what he has done, but his conversation with Atreus, upon his arrival, does indicate a guilty conscience:

> *Dilvere possem cuncta, nisi talis fores.*
> *sed fateor, Atreu, fateor, admisi omnia*
> *quae credidisti. pessimam causam meam*
> *hodierna pietas fecit. est prorsus nocens*
> *quicumque visus tam bono fratri est nocens.* (512-516)

> I could excuse everything I've done, if you were not as you are.
> But I confess Atreus, I confess. I did all that you believed.
> Your piety today has made my case the worst.
> Indeed guilty is he who seems guilty to so good a brother.

This confession of guilt is virtually unprompted. Atreus has urged that they forget the past and reunite as brothers, which either Thyestes believes, and thus unburdens himself of his guilt because he feels it is safe to do so, or Thyestes does not believe Atreus, and confesses to try to placate Atreus. The latter seems an unsound strategy. As Boyle (2017, 281) notes, the legal language used here – *dilvere, admisi, causam, nocens* – suggests that Thyestes has come prepared to defend himself: 'But instead of an *apologia* the audience witnesses 'a refusal to defend' contrary to the

Senecan norm, where characters regularly mount a defence of their conduct.' Arguably, this confession is Thyestes' masochistic guilt complex surfacing. In the past, away in his exile, he has been able to repress his feelings of guilt, and perhaps convinced himself that he had atoned for his past actions through the act of his exile; however, returning to Atreus meant that his guilt, and his need for punishment, has resurfaced.

This desire for punishment does not stand at odds with Thyestes' desire for the throne. After all, the events that resulted in his exile occurred because he desired *more* power. The need for suffering and the desire to gain something can be intertwined. As we have seen in the previous chapters, masochism does not always manifest in one direction. Indeed, these two opposing masochistic manifestations in Thyestes provides explanation for his inconstancy: his 'unwilling step' is the result of two opposing masochistic tropes. The opening words of Thyestes' song in the final act seem to confirm that his guilt and his desire have been satisfied by his return home:

> *Pectora longis hebetata malis,*
> *iam sollicitas ponite curas.*
> *fugiat maeror fugiatque pavor,*
> *fugiat trepidi comes exilii*
> *tristis egestas rebusque gravis*
> *pudor afflictis…* (920-925)

> Heart, dulled by long miseries,
> now put aside fretful cares.
> Away with sorrow, away with fear,

away with bitter want, the companion of gloomy exiles,

and shame, the heavy burden of misfortune.

His sense of satiety and relief, of course, does not last long, as his sense of foreboding grows, and Atreus enters to glory in his victory over Thyestes. Mythologically it is inevitable that Thyestes reached this point, and likewise through Seneca's own characterisation of Thyestes it is inevitable that he has reached this point. Thyestes' masochistic desire, and his masochistic guilt complex, drew him inexorably towards Atreus, and the riches of the crown. Thyestes' masochistic passivity meant that he was never able to exercise enough caution, or have enough awareness, to escape Atreus' plan.

Thyestes is one of Seneca's darkest plays, depicting moral turpitude and black imagery. As Boyle (1997, 33) writes: 'Here nature, the gods are reduced to shocked, impotent observers of human bestiality and sin.' Seneca systematically depicts Atreus' assumption of control over the entire storyline, illustrating Thyestes' moral and psychological disintegration, until he becomes almost indicative of Atreus' earlier words '*quod nolunt velint'*. Thyestes is constantly forced to do that he which he may not want to do, whether it is by Atreus, Tantalus, or even himself. He is unable to express himself, to fully assert his identity and impose himself on the plot of his own making; rather, he is swept along by those around him, constantly being pushed to exactly where Atreus wants him. Thyestes acts contrary to what he thinks, and he thinks nothing of his body's involuntary actions. He refuses to unite thought and action, to consider appropriately and identify an appropriate course of action. Atreus successfully controls Thyestes, not only physically, in terms of the acts that he makes him commit, but psychologically; in spite of himself, Thyestes seals his own fate. It is

a case of sadistic triumph over masochistic discombobulation: Atreus thinks of everything, anticipates everything, and executes everything perfectly; Thyestes, in contrast, ignores stark reality, promotes vain hope over informed reason, and cannot determine his own wants in order to even hope to impose his will on the situation. The autocratic, sadistic, relentless and 'bestial' (Boyle 1997, 46) Atreus conquers the vacillating, irrational, and masochistic Thyestes.

Section 1 conclusion

This section has identified the key tropes that make up the masochistic persona, and explored how they manifest within our central texts. Masochism has a set of psychological behaviours and traits attached to it, which influence characters' behaviour, and their understanding of what is happening around them, being, at its core, a 'personality structure based on submission and dependence' (Charme, 1983, 221). This section has identified three particular traits that are inherent in reading masochism: control, passivity, and responsibility. Masochistic characters often choose passivity, opting to submit to the will of another person, or a situation, rather than trying to assert themselves; they may choose to be controlled, or unwillingly be controlled by people, and are unable to extricate themselves from that control; and, finally, they refuse or are unwilling to accept responsibility for any consequences that may come about as a result of their deliberate disavowal of their agency. The characters and texts that this section has examined have shown that while there are varying degrees of masochistic behaviour, and a variance in which particular traits characters show, and to what degree, the underlying characteristics remain the same. Ultimately, this examination and understanding of the masochistic persona allows a different and deeper reading of these characters, particularly in terms of seeing their victimisation as an ironically purposeful choice, and it enables an analysis of masochistic narrative, which will be explored in the following section.

The (ironic) reality of a sadomasochistic relationship is that a sadist requires a victim, but this victim does not by necessity need to be a masochist; whether or not the victim enjoys the nature of their relationship is irrelevant to a sadist, as the relationship is essentially impersonal (Deleuze 1997, 19). This was clear in *Justine*, where the sadists had no regard for Justine's welfare or protestations; though her

masochism was useful to them, insofar as it allowed them to manipulate her easily, her actual identity was irrelevant. Deleuze refers to this as the 'dual language' of sadism (1997, 19), based on the personal predilections of the sadist, versus the impersonal practice of these predilections upon the victim, meaning that the personality or individuality of the victim is irrelevant.

A masochist needs someone to control, dominate, or victimise them; however, this person does not need to be a sadist, but rather someone who is capable of fulfilling a pseudo-sadistic role. Many of the characters Encolpius falls victim to are not sadistic; they are simply adept at taking advantage of weaker characters like Encolpius, and he becomes their ideal mark. In the case of Catullus, we do not know what Lesbia is; certainly in Catullus' mind she is sadistic and cruel (Greene 1998, 19); indeed, the only reality we have that exists for Lesbia is the one that Catullus makes for her. Thus, terms such as dominance and submission are synonymous with sadomasochism: the sadist seeks *to dominate* and the masochist *to submit*, though the sadist does not always seek the masochist specifically, wishing rather simply to dominate; and nor does the masochist seek the sadist: often masochists subconsciously seeks a dominant person, and therefore are not aware of what they are pursuing. This can be one of the difficulties of examining sadomasochism: the two terms are inseparable, and yet the sadist and the masochist themselves are.

Justine served as a useful template for exploring the central facets of the masochistic persona. Sade's preoccupation with his sadists means that Justine's character is only fleshed out enough to show her as an ideal victim. As a character, Justine does not have the same complexity as our classical characters, because she exists mainly to facilitate the libertines' pleasure. Justine's staunch Catholicism is a useful vehicle for her masochistic victimisation: because of her faith, Justine is

controlled, manipulated, and tortured. Sade highlights the apparent absurdity of Justine's intractable virtue by pitting her against the self-centric philosophies of the libertines.

The next *Justine* chapter will examine the way that Justine's masochism produces a cyclical text, and the repercussions of this, which are a direct result of Justine's narration. As there are two levels to Justine's narration – the Justine who experiences events immediately, and the Justine who narrates them at a later point to Juliette – I will examine the similarities between the two types of narration, and show that the exterior Justine still has not learnt anything from her misadventures. She still has the same narrowed view of the world that the interior Justine does, and cannot see that her behaviour in any way contributed to her misfortunes. This ultimately shows that Justine's masochism is pervasive: both the interior and exterior Justine suffer under the same moral masochism, and it infects both levels of the text's narrative.

Justine's masochism facilitates the cyclical nature of the narrative, as she becomes trapped in a repetitive series of misadventures. The narrative does not vary, because Justine has no ability to vary it. As we have seen, her masochism causes her to be controlled and passive; she is unable to do anything proactive to free herself from her situation, unless it is in line with her virtuous principles. Any agency that she has is tied to her virtue, and she cannot commit an act that is outside of that perceived agency. She cannot change her approach to the libertines, or play a deceptive role in order to escape from her situation. She is repeatedly captured by the libertines, because she expects reciprocal behaviour from everyone she encounters; her experience does not vary, and she does not learn from those experiences. Her refusal to take responsibility for her situation, and to proactively try to change her fate, means that she is continually ensnared and victimised by the libertines.

Encolpius, like Justine, readily submitted to the will of others, and offered little resistance when he found himself in an undesirable situation. In the Quartilla scene, Encolpius capitulates to Quartilla's control, and is unable to do anything proactive to extricate himself from the situation. Encolpius is easily controlled and emotionally manipulated, particularly by characters like Giton and Eumolpus, who take advantage of Encolpius' irrational and gullible personality. Finally, because Encolpius rarely asserts his own will, or thinks independently of others, he takes little responsibility for the events that befall him. Rather, he sees himself as a victim, whether that be of Quartilla, Ascyltus, or a more aggrandised concept such as 'fate'.

It was clear in the *Satyricon* that Encolpius' masochistic behaviours were exacerbated by situations where he became highly emotional or stressed. Encolpius is more prone to passivity when he becomes agitated or overwhelmed, causing him to surrender his agency and submit to a particular person, like Trimalchio, or to a group dynamic, like during the Quartilla scene. The same qualities that make Encolpius a poor picaro – his passivity, lack of self-control or awareness, and inability to take responsibility for his behaviour – also make him a masochist. The next section will explore the ramifications of Encolpius' masochistic behaviours for his narrative consistency, and his untrustworthiness as a narrator. In that sense, expanding on the comparison already made between Encolpius and Eumolpus further illustrates Encolpius' masochistic persona, and his unreliability as a narrator: Eumolpus is the ultimate con man, and his ability to inveigle his way into people's lives makes him a skilled picaro, and an entertaining narrator. Encolpius, on the other hand, has difficulty sustaining a role for any length of time, and he is unable to deliver a narrative that is not coloured by his own deluded understanding of what is happening around him.

Catullus is controlled by his love for Lesbia, and finds himself in a state of (seemingly) unwilling servitude to her. Though his resentment towards Lesbia increases markedly, he feels that he is unable to stop himself from loving her, or actively separate himself from her. This is in line with Charme's discussion of the oft-distorted nature of masochistic love, where the masochist 'believes that voluntary sacrifice and submission are ways to express unshakable love and loyalty to his partner. The more suffering he is willing to tolerate, the greater his love must be' (Charme 1983, 222). This desire to love Lesbia more than anyone has been loved before (cf. 87.1-2) turns Catullus' love into a trial to be endured, because his masochistic traits mean that he is controlled by that love.

As we have seen, though Catullus may address the shortcomings in his relationship with Lesbia, he still passively submits to her; he cannot stop loving her, and is thus victimised by that love. His desire to prove his love by enduring all that Lesbia does to him means that Catullus is controlled by it, and cannot change his situation. By placing the blame for their situation entirely on Lesbia, Catullus denies all responsibility for his situation. Perceiving Lesbia to be the catalyst for his distress has a strong influence on how Catullus portrays both himself and Lesbia, which in turn has important ramifications for the development of the narrative, given that Catullus' voice is the only one the reader has. Lesbia herself has no voice with which to defend herself, or to temper Catullus' version of events. The next chapter will interrogate Catullus' relationship with Lesbia through the lens of the masochistic contract, which introduces the notion of deliberate yet unconscious victimisation. In the next chapter I propose that while Catullus sees himself as the powerless victim of Lesbia, the reality is that he unconsciously victimises her, by demanding his own

suffering. I will show how this manifests in the later Lesbia poems, and why it is the reason that Catullus' repeated "attempts" to abandon Lesbia fail.

Thyestes' masochism became clear by reading his behaviour against Atreus'. Thyestes' vacillating nature, and his lack of awareness of what was happening around him, showed him as not only a far weaker character than his brother, but as a masochist, suffering both an unconscious need to be punished for his past actions, and under masochistic delusion, as he tried to quell his paranoia about returning home. Atreus' presence in the play is commanding: following on from the Fury in the prologue, he determines and dictates how his plan will unfold, and follows through with every minute detail until he achieves success. Thyestes, on the other hand, abandons any half-formulated plans that he may have formed on his way to Argos. Thyestes is easily controlled by those around him, passively submitting to the directions of Tantalus and Atreus. Thyestes does not take responsibility for his situation, nor for the possible repercussions of his original betrayal of Atreus, meaning that he is easily coerced into the penultimate events of the play, eventually making Atreus triumphant in his victory.

Understanding these inherent differences between the two brothers will be intrinsic to the next Senecan chapter, which examines the control that each of them can assert over the narrative. Tragic drama, of course, does not have a single, continuous narrative, but presents multiple perspectives, through which the reader can make their own judgments. Atreus' psychological power and conviction makes him not only a more successful character than Thyestes, but a more persuasive and believable character. This, combined with the mythological prefiguration, means that when Thyestes first appears on stage, conversing in "Stoic" tones, his words do not have the same power or persuasiveness that Atreus' words do. This means that the

narrative that Thyestes presents never has the resonance or the ability to become misleading or unreliable, because Thyestes himself is not a persuasive character. His masochistic persona causes his vacillating behaviour, which ultimately makes him a character that does not embody confidence or trustworthiness.

This section has demonstrated the way masochistic traits manifest in classical texts. This now allows us, in section two, to examine the effect a masochist has on a narrative. Understanding these points of commonalities in masochists is similarly useful for analysing and appreciating the roles that masochists play across different genres. The next section will utilise the definitional framework of this section to explore the implications of masochistic characteristics for narrative and genre. Understanding the baseline behaviours that make up the masochistic persona forms the mechanism by which we have identified masochists within this section, and from here the next step is to understand how these features colour and influence narrative construction.

Justine: sublimity and masochistic narration

This chapter explores how Justine's masochistic persona creates dissonance between the levels of narration in *Justine.* Justine's narrative picks up in the light of Sade's own opening dedication, which appears to stand in stark contrast to the events within the novel. Sade claims in his opening that he wishes to show virtue trampled on by vice, so that the glory of virtue itself will be awakened in the reader, giving them a greater appreciation of the importance and righteousness of behaving virtuously. This contrasts with the sublimity of the ending of *Justine*, where, having finally survived her trials, Justine is struck down by a bolt of lightning (263). Finally, the extradiegetic narrator encourages the reader to be sympathetic to Justine's plights. Understanding Sade's aims within the dedication, his concluding statements, and the body of the narrative itself, requires examination of the differences between the historical author and reader, the implied author and reader, and the narrator and narratee. As Frappier-Mazur (1998, 191) explores, the emotional reactions of the historical reader and the modern reader could be quite different. Bearing these elements in mind, we can then examine *Justine* itself, to appreciate how Justine's masochism makes her an unreliable narrator, one whose perception of what is happening around her is so affected by her religious masochism that she misreads, misreports, and withholds information from the reader. Examining this element of Justine's persona establishes the link between masochism and unreliability, which shapes my subsequent reading of my classical texts.

One of the central reasons that Justine is an unreliable narrator is because there is little difference, or additional insight, between the exterior and interior versions of Justine; that is, the Justine who narrates her misadventures and the Justine who

immediately experiences them.[97] Justine's masochism is one of the contributing factors to this lack of insight, as it is her unfailing devotion to her religion that compromises her insight, and prevents her from learning from her previous adventures, and adapting to new ones. I begin this chapter by analysing the way Justine's masochism influences her narration, starting with the Bressac episode, and will then move to consider the impact that Sade's dedication, the implied author, and the extradiegetic narrator have on the narrative.

The Bressac episode occurs at an early stage in Justine's misadventures. Having run away from the libertine Saint-Florent into the woods, Justine is lamenting her fate when she hears Bressac enter the woods with his male servant and lover, Jasmine. The exterior Justine – that is, the Justine relating her story – notes that the Comte de Bressac "possessed a considerable degree of wickedness and libertinism in his head" (49). Justine tries to exhort Bressac to have mercy on her; however, he and Jasmine tie each of Justine's limbs to four trees, and stand by and mock her as she suffers. Eventually, Bressac releases Justine and says: "Thérèse, follow us and hold your tongue. If you do what I say, you won't have cause to regret it… but if you abuse my favours, if you betray my trust or do not submit to my will… see these four trees, Thérèse… the slightest act of disobedience will see you brought back here straightaway" (51). Justine agrees at once, ignoring at this stage the clear incompatibility between her views and those of Bressac: "I gave him my word that I would do what he asked. However, he was as insensitive to my joy as to my pain."

Justine is taken on as a paid companion to Bressac's aunt, Madame de Bressac, upon whom Bressac is dependent, by virtue of Madame de Bressac's marriage to his uncle. The exterior Justine begins to explain the personalities of both

[97] From now on, I shall refer to them as the 'exterior' and 'interior' Justine, in order to easily differentiate between the two.

Madame de Bressac and the Comte de Bressac. As she explains the depravity of Bressac, she interrupts herself to state: "Should I be honest with you? Alas, yes, because to hide my faults from you would be to betray your trust and ill repay the interest that my misfortunes have inspired in you" (54). Here Justine partially recognises a possible weakness in the reliability of her narration; if she were not to confess to Madame de Lorsange that she fell in love with Bressac, she would be holding back a part of her story, and thus retelling her story in an unreliable or incomplete way. Thus, the exterior Justine points out a key difference between her story and the story of the interior Justine: the exterior Justine no longer loves Bressac, and can recognise him for what he is, a libertine who seeks to 'systematically undermine and ultimately destroy any notion of feminine virtue' (Neff 2002, 420). However, both versions of Justine's narration are still unreliable in how they understand and handle Bressac's attitude and behaviour.

Thus, the narrative proceeds along two lines of unreliability: firstly, the tendency of the interior Justine's affections to colour her impression of Bressac, and her own behaviour towards him; secondly, her lack of comprehension of Bressac's libertine philosophies, and the attitude of Justine towards them. Grayson (1990, 84-85) identifies this unreliability as the consequence of splitting, in the sense of the layering of the novel, and the versions of Justine within each subsequent story: 'Unfortunately, Justine seems to undermine herself in the process of reconstructing and narrating the events of her life. Her splits lead to multiple relationships: Justine-Juliette, Thérèse-Juliette, Thérèse-Justine, Thérèse and other victims, victim and persecutor, Madame de Lorsange and the nameless narrator, and so on. Each alias and therefore each interaction manifests a partial relationship to language, resulting in an overall inconsistency in the text and in Justine's identity.' The reluctance of the

exterior Justine to recognise her past feelings for Bressac is an example of this kind of partial relationship: although she acknowledges that she once possessed those feelings, she has no desire to recognise them, or to scrutinise how they may have impacted on her behaviour.

Justine's masochism provides another explanation for her feelings for Bressac, and her later reluctance to acknowledge them. As the previous Sadean chapter explored, Justine's masochism primarily manifests as a facet of her religious beliefs; however, these traits make her susceptible to other forms of masochism as well. I recall here Charme's discussion of the common qualities of masochism as a distortion of love, which includes that the masochist will lose their sense of 'independence and autonomy… His willingness to sacrifice everything for his partner reflects a feeling of his own insignificance and helplessness compared to the other's magnificence and omnipotence' (1983, 222). This is the same type of masochism that we saw at work in Catullus in the last section.

This is certainly the case initially for Justine, who states: "In spite of all my reflections on his cruelty, his distant attitude towards women, the depravity of his tastes, and the moral gulf that separated us, nothing in the world could extinguish such a gripping passion, and if the Comte had asked me to lay down his life, I would have sacrificed it for him a thousand times" (54). This illustrates to what degree Justine had submitted to Bressac, and that he had taken a position of paramount importance in her life, far and above herself.[98] Justine's attempts to see some good in

[98] Delers (2010, 661) argues that: 'By making the innocent Justine fall madly in love with a murderous homosexual libertine, the author reveals himself to be an astute manipulator of generic expectations: he manages to balance the dark reality of Justine's situation with ironic glimpses of hope for a positive sentimental resolution to the plot.' I cannot agree with this point; rather, falling in love with Bressac makes Justine's situation more hopeless. The dedication to the text has left us with the impression that there will be little happiness for Justine, which thus subverts any hope the reader may experience that Bressac will be softened by Justine's affections. Further, Sade uses Justine's affections for Bressac to make her masochism more palpable, and ultimately her situation more hopeless.

Bressac's behaviour towards her further accords with the masochist's tendency to interpret abusive behaviour as evidence of love (Charme 1984, 222): "I was so blind to his coldness towards me, I was sometimes weak enough to believe that he was not so indifferent towards me" (54).

These observations of Justine clearly illustrate her unreliability. She can recognise and identify the differences between herself and Bressac, but only to the point of identifying their absurdity; she cannot overcome the feelings herself, and instead feels emotionally tied to Bressac, and in turn desires to try to convert him away from his libertine ways. Her love for Bressac, and the masochism that inspires, coalesces with her religious masochism to make her situation more hopeless. Each attempt Justine makes is met by unfailing resistance from Bressac, who counters Justine with his own arguments about the role of Nature, such as those that I explored earlier. Having made these many unsuccessful attempts, Justine observes: "I tried to find personal reasons to stifle in my heart the unhappy flame of passion that burned there, but is love an illness that one can recover from? All of my attempts to quell it merely served to make its flame burn more brightly, and the perfidious Comte never appeared more lovable to me than when I had taken account of everything that should have made me detest him" (60). While there is a higher level of awareness here, both of her own feelings and the improbability of them, the irrationality remains: Justine submits to her feelings for Bressac, despite the evident improbability that these feelings have any kind of hope, and those feelings distract her from making any attempt to escape.

Four years pass in this way, with Justine consumed and ruled by her feelings for Bressac. At this point, Bressac tries to enlist Justine's help in his plot to kill his aunt, so that he can claim his inheritance. Justine tries to plead with Bressac to change

his mind and to consider another plan, but he is unmoved. It is here that Justine's unreliability becomes more apparent, as she explains: "But I did not know the man I was dealing with, I did not know the extent to which passions engendered crime in this perverse soul" (64). This statement is patently unreliable; not only has she had four years to understand Bressac, but he has spent those four years repeatedly sharing his views and proclivities with her. Bressac's plan, and his determination to carry it through, should come as no surprise to Justine.

Justine decides to pretend to go along with Bressac's scheme, in a bid to buy herself some time to formulate some sort of plan. Here Justine acknowledges that Bressac's proposal has effectively rendered nugatory all her former feelings, and she is now consumed only with stopping his plans. Unsurprisingly, unable to come up with a plan of her own initiative to stop Bressac, Justine reveals everything to his aunt. Bressac gets wind of her treachery, through reading the body language of both Justine and his aunt, employing the kind of libertine intuition and alertness that we have seen elsewhere. Justine, however, does not suspect that he has found them out (the exterior Justine laments "I confess to you, Madame… nothing prepared me for th shocking misfortune that awaited me… I felt so certain that the Marquise's secret and her plans were safe that I never imagined that the Comte could have discovered them" 68), once again illustrating her usual ignorance and misplaced confidence. Bressac asks Justine to meet him later for a walk in the woods, where he takes her back to the original four trees he tied her to on their first meeting. Here Bressac says, "What has your falseness led you to do, unworthy creature? You have risked your life without saving my aunt's. The deed is done and I shall reap its rewards on returning to the castle, but you must die and you must learn before you expire that the path of virtue is

not always the safest one, and that there are circumstances in this world when complicity with a crime is preferable to treachery." (69).

It is pertinent to recall these words as Justine's story continues, particularly during the Roland episode, where she is confronted with the choice of complicity in crime, in order to save her own life. With Roland, arguably, the choice is theoretically easier, because no other innocent life is at stake, like that of the Marquise de Bressac; rather, Justine will ultimately save the lives of the other women Roland has enslaved, were she to decide to let Roland hang. Carter (1978, 53-54) describes this as Sade's immoral victory over the reader, 'who is bound to urge the spotless Justine, just this once, to soil her hands with crime.' It never crosses the interior Justine's mind that she could have allowed Roland to die, nor does it cross the mind of the exterior Justine, who only remarks on Roland's cruelty, when he immediately pretends afterwards that he is going to kill her by suspending her into a pit full of his former victims, before hoisting her back out: "Was I to complain, was I to congratulate myself? What kind of reward was this for what I had done once again just done for him… oh, what a man!" (214). She offers no reflection on what had occurred just before this, and whether she made the right decision.

The final point to consider is the way in which Justine narrates her experiences to the reader, as this plays an important role in her unreliability. Justine's masochism, as a product of her religious beliefs, manifests not only as a need to live by the strict tenets of her religion, and to try to persuade others towards her faith, but also in her unwillingness to enter into descriptive dialogue that is not analogous with her faith. This means that Justine will often utilise metaphors, or simply avoid describing events in detail. Ultimately, this means that the reader does not get a full appreciation of Justine's experiences, which in turn restricts the empathetic connection that a reader is

capable of establishing with Justine herself. As Grayson (1990, 87) explains: 'Justine's very delicacy of word and deed is a false position in the Sadian/Hobbesian jungle, encouraging her victimisation. This delicacy is most apparent in her relationship to metaphor and her refusal to detail certain scenes, which reduces both their impact and our sympathy for her.' For example, when Justine is trapped within the monastery, she states: "Two nights later, I slept with Jerome. I will not describe his horrific behaviour to you, it was even more terrifying" (146). She deliberately withholds information from the reader, making a value judgement on their behalf that they do not need access to that particular piece of information. Her masochism thus infiltrates the perspective that the reader has open to them in engaging with the text.

Further to this, the libertines' directness and openness of speech contrasts sharply with Justine's silence, ultimately meaning that they are the more reliable and trustworthy characters. The reader is privy to the same treatises by the libertines as Justine receives, and their accounts are no less detailed and no less coherent than hers. In the face of Justine's harrowing experiences, it is difficult to be persuaded to her view, and her lack of narrative colour similarly makes it difficult to sympathise with her, ultimately meaning that the reader may be persuaded away from Justine, and towards the libertines' perspective.

I would now like to move to the other aspects of narration in *Justine,* to establish how Sade constructs a text around Justine's masochistic unreliability. Justine opens with a dedication to Marie-Constance Quesnet, whom Sade took on as a paid companion after he left the Bastille (Lever 1995, 379). Sade held Constance's virtue and morals in high regard, and he made mention of their friendship in his will (Lever

1995, 585).[99] Sade uses the dedication to suggest to Constance – and by extension the reader – the kinds of reactions that she will have while reading his text:

> Yes, Constance, it is to you that I am dedicating this work. At once the example and honour of your sex, combining the fairest and most enlightened intellect with the most sensitive of natures, you alone can know those sweet tears shed by suffering Virtue… Once you have understood my motives, they will not be disavowed by them… The aims of this fiction (which is not as fictional as some might think) are doubtless new. The ascendancy of Virtue over Vice, good rewarded and evil punished, such is the general trend of works of this nature. Shall we ever tire of reading them! But everywhere to represent Vice as triumphant and Virtue a victim of its attacks; to show a wretched girl wandering from one misfortune to another; the plaything of wickedness; the butt of every kind of debauchery; confronted with the most barbaric and most monstrous tastes; stunned by the most brazen and most specious sophistries… in short, to dare to write the boldest of descriptions, the most terrifying of maxims, all with the most energetic brushstrokes, with the sole aim of obtaining from all of this one of the most sublime moral lessons that humanity has ever been taught, was, I am sure you will agree, to reach this goal by a road seldom trodden before.
>
> Have I succeeded, Constance? Will a tear from your eyes confirm my virtory? In short, having read *Justine*, will you say 'oh, how

[99] Sade writes: 'Wishing to make this lady aware, so far as my feeble powers permit, of my extreme gratitude for the care and sincere friendship with which she has provided me from August 25, 1790, to the day of my death.'

> these portraits of crime make me proud to love Virtue! How sublime she is when she weeps! How beautiful she is in misfortune!
>
> Oh, Constance! These words need only escape your lips and my labours are rewarded. (3-4)

The notion of the sublime is noteworthy, in the novel generally, and across Sade's works in particular. Sade himself discusses the use of the sublime in his essay *Idée sur les romans.* This essay sees Sade chart the development of the novel through time, and offer his thoughts on what makes a successful novel.[100] I will return to that more general discussion shortly, but Sade's understanding and appreciation of the sublime as a literary tool goes hand in hand with his philosophical views on Nature:

> Nature, more bizarre than any moralist has ever painted her, escapes willy-nilly from the dikes which the moralists' policy would like to prescribe for her; uniform in her élans, irregular in her effects, her breast always agitated, she is like the rim of a volcano from which are ejaculated in turn either the precious stones which serve man's taste for luxury or the balls of fire which annihilate him. Great, when she populates the earth with an Antoninus or a Titus, she is frightful when she vomits forth an Andronicus or a Nero; but she is always sublime, always majestic, always worthy of our study, of the labours

[100] For further discussion of where Sade's essay fits into the development of the novel in France, and literary criticism associated with the genre, see Grieder (1972, 278 ff.). Sade's lengthy imprisonment terms meant that he had the time and opportunity to read an astounding amount of literature, which he integrates into *Idée sur les romans*. May (1965, 5-11) provides a thorough analysis of Sade's influences in *Idée sur les romans,* and how Sade's theories present themselves in his own texts.

> of our paintbrushes, of our respectful admiration – because her designs are not known to us.[101] (17)

Taking this idea concomitantly with the dedication to *Justine*, Sade uses the sublime to show Justine at the mercy of Nature, in the sense of what we might call the 'gothic sublime', that is, Justine being ultimately killed by the bolt of lightning, and the libertines themselves as a product of Nature. In *Justine*, Sade substitutes 'nature in a state of perpetual motion for God' (Bataille 1973, 110). His libertines often embrace this idea of perpetual motion to rationalise their own acts, as Bressac states:

> "Oh, what does it matter to Nature's eternal creation that the mass of flesh which today makes up a biped creature should tomorrow be reproduced as a thousand different insects… Oh, Therese, it is only man's pride that made murder a crime. Imagining himself to be the most sublime being on the planet and the most essential to it, this vain creature proceeded from this false principle to ensure that any action that would destroy his fellows must necessarily be a foul one, but his vanity, his folly, in no way changes the laws of Nature… Human passions are nothing but the means by which she employs to achieve her aims. When she needs more individuals, she inspires love in us and thus creates them. When destruction becomes necessary to her, she fills our hearts with vengeance, avarice, lewdness, and ambition, and so we have murders, but she has always

[101] All translations of *Idée sur les romans* are adapted from Coward's translation.

> worked in her own interests… Nature does not place in our hands the means to disrupt her economy." (62)

The other libertines within the text provide variations on this same ideal, forming the basis for a philosophy that Sade, as the implied author, is trying to push through the work as a whole. This philosophy does not necessarily go hand in hand with the historical Sade, however, as it is not consistent across all his works (Bataille 1973, 110). Separating the historical author and the implied author is difficult in the case of Sade, where his characterisations are so often merged with the man himself.[102] Nelles (1993, 22) describes the separation between the historical author and the implied author as: 'The historical author writes, the historical reader reads; the implied author means, the implied reader interprets.' Naturally, attitudes have changed much towards the historical Sade, and his writings, since he came back into vogue through the 20th century (Wilson 1954, 167). We, as modern readers, are able to reflect more clinically on Sade's works like *Français, encore un effort si vous voulez être républicains*, Sade's Republican pamphlet in *La Philosophie dans le boudoir,* than Sade's contemporary Frenchmen, in the grip of revolution.[103] Similarly, the kinds of philosophies – or the way Sade expressed his philosophies – are not as inexplicable or as shocking now, as they would have been; as Kearney states (1982, 95), Sade is

[102] Particularly, Sade's time and experience in prison permeates his books, and makes it difficult to separate the man and the text. Phillips (2001, 42) notes that the society at Silling in the *120 Days* 'is indeed only possible in the imaginary world conceived in and framed by prison walls.' McMorran (2013, 1131) observes the 'influence of Sade's imprisonment upon fictional topographies dominated by isolated, confined, and subterranean spaces.' Phillips and McMorran are right to observe that topography within the *120 Days*, and it is also present within *Justine*. Many of the libertines Justine encounters, as we saw in the first chapter, live in an isolated space, which gives them the licence to control their victims without interference, for example the monastery that was buried deep in the woods. Here Sade transforms a feature of his imprisonment into a strength of his libertines.

[103] For a thorough analysis of Sade's philosophical design in *Français, encore un effort*, see Shea (2010, 106-130).

'rather like a man who has invented a light-bulb before electricity has been harnessed.'

We, as modern readers, also have the benefit of approaching Sade through the weight of scholarship about him, identifying and in some ways humanising Sade's own writings, 'the freest mind that ever was', according to Guillaume Apollinaire (1909, 22). As Reinhard states (1995, 786), discussing Lacan's seminal work *Kant avec Sade*, '…the conjunction of Kant with Sade not only indicates the break that joins the two figures, but also itself marks a break in the history of ethics, a rupture that will have opened the way for the emergency of psychoanalysis – not as the elaboration of the Sadian catalogue of perversions, but as one of modernity's epochal responses to the escalating intensity of both moral law and pathological objects in the aftermath of traditional ethics based on either revelation or the common good.' Thus, Sade is read from the point of modernity; that kind of juxtaposition with Kant is not something that would have been done contemporaneously. Statements like 'Sade is the inaugural step of a subversion, of which, however amusing it might seem with respect to the coldness of the man, Kant is the turning point…' (Lacan 1989, 56) can only be retrospectively read into Sade's works.

Finally, frequently Sade's works are read cumulatively; that is, in the knowledge of the full Sadean *oeuvre;* with the benefit of a more intimate knowledge of Sade through his own letters, and, as an extension of that, a consideration of the circumstances under which Sade wrote.[104] This cumulative reading is perhaps even more pertinent to *Justine*, a text that Sade returned to twice, becoming more emphatic and more debauched with each version. Shea (2010, 107), discussing Sade's

[104] McMorran (2013, 1131) notes that 'Sade's author is a voyeur as well as an artist, concealing himself behind his narrators in order to see and paint more truly… Sade's isolation from the outside world for much of his career arguably imposed just such an approach.' Here again we can consider the fundamental impact that Sade's imprisonment had upon his writing and the construction of voices within it.

engagement with Cynicism, points to the differences between the openings of *Justine, ou les malheurs de la vertu* and *La nouvelle Justine*: 'Sade [in *Justine, ou les malheurs de la vertu*] simultaneously claims Cynicism for himself and distances himself from the claim by displacing the Cynicism onto his characters and denying its corrosive effects on the reader. But by the time *La nouvelle Justine* came to press he had cast such caution to the wind.'[105] Such a statement is true not only of Sade's engagement with Cynicism in his works, but his approach to vice, libertinage, and his disavowal of virtue more generally.

Thus, Sade's contemporaries – taking Constance, for example, as his ideal reader – did not have the benefit of considering the place of infamy that Sade would ultimately take in literature (Blanchot 2004, 8).[106] Instead, we must consider the expectations that Sade's historical readers would have had for the novel more generally. The novel in 18th century France was not considered a highbrow genre; Georges May (1965, 5) quotes Rousseau as saying: 'In my present circumstances, I can no longer endure any serious reading; and all works requiring cogitation bore me to death. Novels and travel books are from now on all I can tolerate', and that Voltaire commented that the popularity of the novel in France and England 'proves that Paris and London are filled with idle men who need nothing but amusement.' Sade seemed to share this view, writing to his wife: 'Would you be so good as to locate for me a few really interesting and really philosophical novels, but not too sombre, and not too sentimental either, for I utterly detest both these extremes. I say novels since, in the

[105] Jolivet (2011), Delers (2010), and Phillips (2002) provide useful discussion of the differences between the second and final versions of Justine. Aside from the increased violence, and length of the libertines' diatribes, the central difference is that it has a third-person narrator: Justine loses her narrative powers.

[106] Blanchot writes: 'But the book also illustrates that there is no scandal where there is no respect, and that where the scandal is extraordinary, the respect is extreme. Who is more respected than Sade? How many of us, even today, deeply believe that just holding this accursed book in our hands for a moment or two would make Rousseau's disdainful allegation come true: that any young girl who reads even one page of this book will be lost? Such respect is certainly a treasure for a literature and a civilisation.'

evening, I find it impossible to do any serious reading here' (*Oeuvres complètes*, 251). Perhaps part of Sade's decision to write *Idée sur les romans* is to justify his use of the novel as the vehicle for his writings. May (1965, 8) posits that while we cannot know for sure, 'Sade came eventually to realise that, in his own age, the novel had become not only the most popular literary genre, but also the most flexible and the best suited to the expression of new ideas and of a new view of Man' (1965, 8). We could perhaps add to this the limitless nature of the novel, meaning that Sade had an almost endless capacity to canvass his ideas.

This brings us to Sade's own musings on the nature of the novel. Sade opens his essay by reflecting on the two central purposes that he sees for the novel:

> Man is subject to two weaknesses which are closely connected with his existence and which characterise it. He must always implore; he must always love; there you have the foundation for all novels. He has written some in order to depict the people he was imploring; he has written others in order to celebrate those he loved… But since man has implored and loved everywhere in the world, there have always been novels, that is, works of fiction; sometimes they have depicted the fabled objects of his worship; at other times, they have depicted the more real objects of his love. (5)

Sade then traces the development of the novel through time, before coming to discuss the English novel, particularly the works of Richardson and Fielding, whom he greatly admires. It is here that we begin to get a clear indication of the link between Sade's view of the novel, and his words in the dedication to *Justine*:

> His [the novelist's] work should show man not only for what he is, or for what he pretends to be – that is the historian's work – but also as he can be, as he is when modified by vice and the impulses of passion. All the passions and vices must be known, they must all be employed if one wishes to be a novelist; from them we learn that the imposed triumph of virtue is not always of interest… For whenever virtue triumphs, things being what they must be, our tears are stoppered even before they can flow; but, if after the severest trials, we see virtue finally trampled on by vice, our souls are invariably torn apart, and the work, as Diderot said, having penetrated right through our hearts, must unfailingly produce that interest which alone earns praise. (11-12)

Sade refers here to Diderot's essay *A Study of Richardson,* published in 1762, in which Diderot discusses the motivation for acting, and determines that acting must come from an understanding of human nature (1953, 372):

> …the actor who plays from thought, from study of human nature, from constant imitation of some ideal type, from imagination, from memory, will be one and the same at all performances… His passion

> has a definite course – it has bursts, and it has reactions; it has a beginning, a middle, and an end.[107]

It is thus axiomatic that Sade's dedication frames and foreshadows both Justine's forthcoming tortures, and that these tortures are set against a backdrop of sublimity, which will be created through violence and libertinage (Frappier-Mazur, 189),[108] because one could not exist without the other. Justine's victimisation could not exist without the libertine's need to 'create', to attempt to transgress or to glory in the image of nature, which in turn would mean that there could be no pathos, no moment that 'pulls upon the heartstrings' of the reader, who watches Justine undergo these tortures, and Justine would not necessarily continue to endure these tortures if she were not a masochist. At the same time, the two types of the sublime that Sade strives for – through violence and through victimisation – cannot be self-sufficient, and thematically should not be coefficient. That is, the sort of sublimity that brings a tear to the reader's eye is overwhelmed by the sublime violence of the libertines, and ultimately destroyed by the 'gothic' sublime, when Justine is felled by the bolt of lightning, perhaps metaphorically signalling Nature's approval of the libertines.

Thus, beginning the novel in the light of the dedication, we can anticipate the events that are to come, albeit imprecisely, knowing that we are going to see vice painted in 'the most energetic brush strokes', and that Justine's hopes for salvation are entirely futile. The desires of Justine, as she experiences her misadventures, are

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[107] Delon's *Le sublime et l'idée d'énergie* discusses Diderot's use of the sublime, particularly stating that the sublime allows man to wield creative power in the image of nature: 'Il devient le propre de l'homme créateur à l'image de la nature' (1986, 69). Certainly there is a connection here between Diderot's conception of the sublime and Sade's. Nature in Sade, as noted earlier, takes the place of a divine power, and the libertines see themselves as acting in nature's image. Their actions, which for the most part take the form of violence, are what Frappier-Mazur (1998, 186) terms 'estheticisation'.

[108] Frappier-Mazur comments that: 'Nowhere is this esthetics better illustrated than when Sadean violence, inseparable from eroticism, culminates in the effect of sublime.'

against the grain of what Sade wants to achieve within the novel. Similarly, the musings of the Justine who is telling her story cannot be leading to a triumphant or redemptive ending, because Sade has already stated in the dedication that a story where virtue triumphs is old hat. This marries with his discussion of Richardson's *Clarissa* in *Idée sur le romans:*

> …if after twelve or fifteen volumes, the immortal Richardson had virtuously concluded by having Lovelace converted, and by having him wed Clarissa peacefully, would readers have shed as many tears over this transformed version as they have when reading it in its authentic form? (12)

Though we cannot take this as a direct reflection on Sade's purpose in *Justine*, it does make clear that Sade saw no real creative purpose in a 'happily ever after' ending to a novel. Therefore, in examining Justine's narration, we can bear in mind the tension between her narratorial purpose – both the interior and exterior versions of Justine – and Sade's authorial intent. When Justine gives her interpretation of events – those that are happening and have happened – it is against the grain of what Sade is ultimately trying to show. When her understanding and views of events do not match with those of the libertines, her narrative is misreporting to the reader. As I identified in the introduction, misreporting occurs because the narrator has misunderstood, has been confused, or lacks the requisite knowledge to understand (Phelan and Martin 1999, 95). It is Justine's masochism, manifesting through her religious martyrdom, that means she cannot understand appreciate the libertines' viewpoint, and illustrate any awareness of what is happening to her. As we have seen, even when Justine is

reflecting back on her experiences, she shows no insight as to how or why her adventures unfolded in the way that they did.

The vast difference between the views of Justine, and the apparent views of the implied author, Sade, make reading and comprehending *Justine* complex. Booth (1961, 157) argues: 'The implied author may be more or less distant from the reader. The distance may be intellectual… moral (the works of Sade), or aesthetic.' If we accept that the views of Sade's libertines are more in line with Sade's own views as the implied author, the inherent difficulty in reading *Justine* is that the views of the implied author are not only distant from the reader, but are also seemingly distant from the central character. Sade employs what Booth (1961, 378) terms 'psychic vividness' to immerse the reader in his views; he subjects the reader to prolonged exposure to the inside views of his libertines, arguably to persuade the reader away from examining them through the scope of traditional virtues. However, this psychic vividness plays out against the sincerity of Justine's Catholic virtue, creating a complex and often confusing narrative blend. As Edmiston (1987, p.148) states: 'If there is a communication between the implied author of a text and the reader, at the expense of the unknowing narrator, we can say that the implied author is ironic and that the narrator is unreliable.' Here Edmiston is discussing the first version of *Justine*, but his analysis begins from a similar point of acknowledgment of a historical reading of Sade (1987, 148),[109] and, as noted earlier, the same narrative and characterisation difficulties arise in both the first and second versions of *Justine*.

[109] Edmiston notes that: 'If we know Sade historically, then we know that he intended to justify vice and to ridicule virtue… and we read the text by searching for clues of disparity between his values and those of his heroine.' That is, despite what the dedication and opening narrative may suggest, we try to find the antithesis within the text. Justine's masochism facilitates that antithesis, because her masochistic nature makes her a character that is difficult to sympathise with.

Finally, the extradiegetic narrator, who concludes the novel, returns to this same dissonance between the implied reader and the narrators, appearing to urge the reader toward the path of virtue:

> Oh you who have shed tears over the misfortunes of virtue, you who have pitied the wretched Justine, while forgiving the perhaps rather strong colours which we have felt obligated to use, may you at least derive some benefit from it as Madame de Lorsange! May you be convinced like her that true happiness is found in the bosom of virtue alone, and that if, for reasons which it is not ours to divine, God allows it to be persecuted on Earth, it is to make up for it in Heaven with the sweetest rewards. (264)

It is hard to read this conclusion, much like the opening dedication, without a hint of irony. This may in part be because *Justine* was originally conceived as a satire (Phillips 2001, 94), within which Justine represented the Catholic Church. Edmiston (1987, 154) posits that there is a nihilistic irony about the text as a whole: 'He [the observer] will sympathise yet feel superior because he knows the victim cannot win.' Certainly, there is a definite nihilism about *Justine*, and the reader can view Justine as the perennial and hopeless victim. Sade's construction of the masochistic elements of the text adds to this sense of nihilism, because there is an inevitable feeling that Justine is complicit in what is happening to her. Her inability to change, to take power away from the libertines by action, rather than by repetitive and ineffective speech, ultimately marks her as the weaker character, and removes part of the reader's sympathy and identification. The detached and often emotionless way in which she

tells her story only adds to this lack of identification and sympathy. Sade uses Justine's masochism in two ways: to make her narrative unreliable, and to further alienate Justine and her suffering from the reader, so that their attention will be drawn to his sadists.

Thus, having examined the construction of *Justine,* we can see the dissonance between the layers of narration. There is, on the one hand, the implied author, Sade, and the overwhelming knowledge of the historical Sade that goes with that. It is difficult not to read the text in light of all that we know about Sade's philosophical ideas, and his desire to promote them. There is then the extradiegetic narrator, who introduces the two sisters, Justine and Juliette, and who returns at the end to speak effusively of the joy of virtue. Finally, there are the two versions of Justine, one who can speak with the benefit of hindsight, though who only really employs this to provide additional information the interior Justine could not have yet known, and the Justine who experiences firsthand these tortures. The cumulative effect of these layers of narration is that Justine is neither persuasive nor reliable as a narrator. Her masochistic failure to grasp the words or ideas of the libertines means that she cannot interpret or comprehend their actions fully; her unwillingness to alter her own behaviour, or to be complicit in any way with the schemes of the libertines, means that she is often trapped in unfortunate situations by virtue of her own masochistic behaviour; and, finally, her sense of decorum means that she often does not explain the full extent of the horrors visited upon her, so that it is difficult for the reader to sympathise with her. Ultimately, this shows that Sade's polarisation of sadism and masochism works to show his sadistic libertines as effervescent, reliable and fleshed-out characters, and Justine as ineffectual and unreliable.

Encolpius: the unreliable masochist and the *Cena Trimalchionis*

This chapter will examine Encolpius' masochism, and consequent unreliable narration, as the focal point of the *Satyricon*'s narrative structure. The *Satyricon* is not a text which is constructed around what we might call typical narrative milestones (Zeitlin 1971, 652-53): there is no discernible goal for the characters, no definitive beginning, middle, and end, and no tipping points where the reader feels that something momentous has happened or is about to happen; instead, the reader is drawn along episodically and interchangeably, and on a first reading may be almost as befuddled as the characters themselves. One feature that links the often seemingly disconnected episodes in the *Satyricon* is our narrator Encolpius, who is consistently inconsistent. Reading the text through Encolpius highlights his masochism as a binding feature, and brings an immediacy to reading and comprehending the text. It is Encolpius' masochistic nature that allows the text to wander and meander, and to fete the moment of storytelling itself. This occurs because Encolpius' surrendering of his agency allows other characters to dominate the narrative, and to make their moment in the spotlight last. I apply this character-based reading to the *Cena Trimalchionis*, which is a useful vehicle through which to propose this kind of reading, given that it is a virtually complete episode, and in many ways is a microcosm of the *Satyricon* as a whole. The *Cena* illustrates how Encolpius' masochism facilitates the exploratory nature of the episode, by submitting to Trimalchio's control, which features a series of short, loosely-connected episodes, which lead to no real resolution or conclusion, but rather revel in the experience of storytelling.

This chapter orients our reading of the text directly around Encolpius' behaviour from moment to moment, rather than trying to comprehend it within a

broader plot. Positioning our reading around a character-based, episodic reading means that we can focus our reading of the text around Encolpius himself, and read the text as a series of individualised adventures, linked by some overlapping characters.[110] Encolpius' masochism is key to this kind of reading. The qualities that mark him as a masochist – his submissive nature, his uncontrollable emotions, and his tendency to dramatise – are the qualities that allow him to facilitate and perpetuate the meandering and sometimes cyclical elements of the text (Knight 1989, 348). Returning briefly to the Quartilla episode that I examined in the earlier chapter, the longevity of that scene, fragmentary as it is, is primarily because of Encolpius' submission to Quartilla's control. His unwillingness, or inability, to take proactive action against Quartilla and her cohort, his melodramatic reactions and vacillating mood, ensures that the misadventure continues for the duration of the night.

Fundamentally, all of Encolpius' actions and decisions are motivated by his emotions, and consequently his behaviour is almost always out of control, allowing him to be suggestible and thus easily controlled. Encolpius rarely considers a decision: he reacts passionately to events, and typically these reactions become more and more grandiose as one passionate decision influences the next. To this end, his personality and his emotional state are tenuous; he lives at the mercy of his emotions (Conte 1996, 157). Encolpius rarely remains content, but on the other hand also rarely remains unhappy; he is interchangeable rather than constant, and turbulent rather than

[110] Wicks (1989, 314) discusses that this kind of discontinuity can occur within the picaresque form: 'The narrative discontinuity or breaking of normative narrative rhythms is formally suited to the mimesis of chaos, nightmare, and outsiderdom; it reflects the continuous disintegration and disorientation that are seminal to the picaresque situation.' This chapter embraces recognition of picaresque elements in the *Satyricon*, but rather than seeing them as a full answer to the question of genre, rather sees them as one of the cumulative elements that creates the hybrid nature of the *Satyricon*. Wicks' observation highlights some of the elements that are critical in prolonging and energising the *Satyricon*'s narrative. As I will illustrate, Encolpius' chaotic nature is critical to the continuing discontinuity of the text.

tranquil, meaning that because by his very nature he vacillates, he rarely maintains the same emotional state for any length of time (Sullivan 1966, 119).

This kind of behaviour occurs throughout the text: the controlling character may change from episode to episode, but Encolpius' overreactions and histrionics remain consistent. Encolpius' lack of insight allows characters to remain in the story for longer, or to move the narrative laterally, rather than forwards.[111] While Eumolpus' attachment to Encolpius and Giton is an example of the former, a good example of the latter comes at the beginning of the text, when Encolpius attempts to return home to his lodgings: he has no memory of the right way to go and is unable to complete even this simple task (6). Unable to assist himself, he wanders aimlessly in circles, returning constantly to the same place, until eventually he asks an old lady selling vegetables if she knows where he lives (7).[112] When the lady says she can take him there without a problem, Encolpius is not surprised, but rather simply thinks her uncanny, and is then shocked when shortly afterwards they arrive at a brothel. Encolpius reacts rather than thinks: he does not consider his decisions or show any kind of foresight or hindsight (Wicks 1989, 312); he seemingly has no goals, nor any kind of momentum, and simply behaves however the moment takes him (Zeitlin 1971, 683). This facilitates the anecdotal epic structure, because Encolpius as a character exists anecdotally, repeatedly, and apparently without purpose, and it seems unlikely that he could achieve any kind of purpose or goal even if he were to particularly desire one.

[111] Richlin (1983, 190) aptly describes Encolpius as a 'butt, endlessly experiencing humiliation only to be revived again for more of the same.' Encolpius is inescapably passive, and thus characters can repeatedly take advantage of him.

[112] Wicks (1989, 312) argues that: 'This preposterous question shifts the whole fictional world of the *Satyricon* into a disorientation from which it will never recover.' I disagree that this question *shifts* the fictional world, as this suggests that the text was on solid footing before this point, but this kind of incredible gullibility is illustrative of the chaotic and nonsensical way in which Encolpius exists.

Schmeling (1991, 371) argues that Petronius' overall purpose was to create the *Satyricon* as an episodic text, and that even if the text were not fragmentary, it would still read in this individualised and episodic way. He argues that Petronius wanted to engage in an epic-type text, in terms of geography and length, in order to invert and parody the epic style. Schmeling (1991, 359) suggests that the episodes of the *Satyricon* revolve around a series of *peripeteia,* so that Petronius can focus on the 'crises *in mediis rebus*'. In this way, Encolpius is an ideal catalyst for sudden shifts in the mood of an episode, or the way in which events unfold, because he is an unpredictable and vertiginous character.

An incident at the end of the *Cena* metaphorically illustrates this desire to focus on the incidental, fleeting events of the plot, rather than seeking some kind of plot resolution. When Encolpius, Ascyltus and Giton attempt to escape from the dinner, they encounter several obstacles: firstly, Ascyltus is frightened by a dog (72) – an actual dog this time, in contrast with Encolpius' incident with the mural on their way in (29) – and falls into a fishpond. Encolpius attempts to help him, but is too drunk to be of much use, and ends up falling into the pond with him. A porter then comes to try and assist them, who tells them that no one can enter through the same door that they entered (*alia intrant, alia exeunt)*. While Courtney (2001, 117), *inter alios*, draws attention to the Virgilian connection here, and the descent to the underworld in *Aeneid* book 6, the other point to be made here is that there are no open and shut endings in the *Satyricon*: the path of Encolpius to escape Trimalchio must be as convoluted as the plot itself; nor is Petronius ready to end the episode at this point, so by complicating the exit strategy of the protagonists, who are too muddled and

ineffectual to effect their own egress,[113] he extends the episode, which eventually culminates in the gauche and bizarre mock funeral for Trimalchio (78).

Schmeling (1991, 375) argues that Petronius wrote the episodes of the *Satyricon* for a group recitation of some sort, which explains why they can be read episodically rather than cumulatively, and also explains the variety of scenes, locations, and genres that appear.[114] He argues that the *Cena* is in the style of a symposium, which in part is a natural explanation for the way the narrative is passed around between characters. Certainly, Habinnas' late entry (65), and its resemblance to the entrance of Alcibiades in the *Symposium* (216d) invites the reader to recall Plato (Cameron 1969, 367-368).[115]

If Schmeling is right that each episode loosely embraces a particular genre, then it becomes even more clear why Encolpius is the ideal fit for such a confection of episodes. Zeitlin (1971, 683) states that Encolpius 'has no past or future, no destination or purpose', which makes him an effective central character for a text that has no desire to reach a particular purpose, or to be introspective.[116] We can take this point even further than that, though: Encolpius' behaviour, tied as it is to his

[113] Conte (1996, 125) points out that 'the *scholastici* of the *Satyricon*… are really powerless victims of the aggression which the world of the freedmen commits against them.' While Conte's point is made out through a variety of incidents in the *Satyricon*, it is here that we can clearly see how much Encolpius, Ascyltus, and Giton are subdued and oppressed within Trimalchio's domain.

[114] Hägg (1983) likewise points out that the *Satyricon* demonstrates Petronius' 'artistic talent, demonstrating his keen eye for human weaknesses and exploring his facility for widely different styles.'

[115] Cameron states that, with this allusion, Petronius is not mocking Plato: 'He was writing for men as well read and as alert as himself, men who would see at once the absurdity of and the skill of making the vulgar Habinnas play the role of the aristocratic and romantic Alcibiades. Once more Petronius casts an absurdly unheroic character in the part of a figure from serious literature.' As Cameron points out, this aggrandizing of pathetic and morally bankrupt characters occurs throughout the text. Encolpius, as we have seen, frequently likens himself to a Homeric or Virgilian hero; and, of course, during the Pergamum boy episode, Eumolpus was cast as a kind of depraved and morally bankrupt Socrates.

[116] Anderson (1982, 99-100) discusses Petronius' use of satire and social commentary, arguing that his choice of style (or styles) is more convenience than principle: 'He had after all to keep the narrative going in *something*, without necessarily setting out to advocate it… The fact that Petronius ridicules extremes of style, high and low, may be due to the fact that they are easy to ridicule, rather than that he approves of the means required to frame and offset them.' I agree with this point, which marries well with Hägg's point about the *Satyricon* illustrating Petronius' prowess for a variety of genres. Encolpius as a character is almost like a blank canvas, through which Petronius can show his versatility.

masochistic psychology, makes him malleable, so that he can be shifted from genre to genre without seeming out of place,[117] by virtue of the fact that his behaviour and mannerisms are always constantly egregious, and thus in a sense he is always out of place. Zeitlin is right to say that Encolpius has no purpose, but even more than that he has no real sense of self. He is parrot-like in his behaviour and speech, meaning that he can be manipulated into a variety of situations, and, by extension, a variety of genres.

George (1966, 350) notes that Encolpius frequently mirrors the speech of whomever he is with, and arguably that is one of the ways that Encolpius migrates from episode to episode, and genre to genre. The controlling character shifts – Quartilla, Trimalchio, Eumolpus – and Encolpius shifts with them. This lack of a real sense of self is a feature of the masochistic persona broadly. As Charme (1983, 222) argues: 'The masochist regards the other person as an ideal self (ego-ideal). He lacks any sense of his own self's independence and autonomy.' While Charme argues this specifically in relation to masochism as a distortion of love, I believe that in the case of Encolpius we can apply this more generally. As Encolpius is a character who so easily and repeatedly surrenders control, it is arguable that he frequently loses any sense of self as he ricochets from moment to moment.

Knight (1989, 343) recognises this lack of a sense of self in both Encolpius and Trimalchio: 'There is no real self because the ostentatious self never ends. Trimalchio is entrapped by a language which he has generated but can no longer control… Like Trimalchio, Encolpius is the extreme embodiment of existential man, for whom reality is the product of day-by-day, moment-by-moment creation.' Though

[117] George (1966, 358) comments that: 'Encolpius and Giton are propelled from one crisis to the next, not because they are pursuing some quest like the conventional romance hero, but because they are totally vulnerable to the scheming of others.' I would argue that for the same reason that they are easily propelled between crises also makes them the ideal characters to shift between different generic structures.

Knight's point about the 'ostentatious self' refers specifically to Trimalchio, it could also easily be applied to Encolpius, a character who exists predominantly through histrionics, and in whom it is difficult to identify any kind of constancy or character beyond his ostentatious and melodramatic speech and action (Konstan 1994, 117).

Examining the interrelation between Encolpius' masochism and his unreliable narration is useful for appreciating the episodic structure of the text, and informs our examination of Encolpius' masochism at work within the *Cena*. I return here to Phelan and Martin's six types of unreliable narration – misreporting, misreading, misevaluating, underreporting, underreading, and underregarding – which I examined in part in the previous Sadean chapter. Encolpius exemplifies all six of these types of unreliable narration, to greater or less degrees, which are borne out by his masochistic nature. It is useful to bear these in mind as we move through the remainder of this chapter.

We can now look at more specific examples of Encolpius' masochistic unreliability throughout the *Cena*, which in turn will show how his behaviour enables the narrative to unfold as it does. Predominantly, speech in the *Cena* is reported directly by Encolpius, which gives the reader relatively unhindered access to Trimalchio and the other diners (Laird 1999, 217), rather than the information being interpreted and filtered through Encolpius. It also reveals Encolpius' unreliability, because it highlights the stark difference between pretence and reality, and how taken in by it Encolpius is (Bartsch 1994, 198), making him susceptible to misreporting and underreporting.

Particularly, there is a difference between how Encolpius perceives what is happening around him, compared to the other diners: while Encolpius initially takes Trimalchio at his word, the more seasoned diners are more circumspect, and know to

be on the lookout for tricks (Knight 1989, 342). For example, when the wooden hen is brought out, Trimalchio states:

> *Amici… pavonis ova gallinae iussi supponi. Et mehercules timeo ne iam concepti sint; temptemus tamen, si adhuc sorbilia sunt.* (33)
>
> Friends, I ordered the bird to sit on some hens' eggs. And damnit I'm worried they're about to hatch. But let's give it a go, and see if we can suck them up.

Encolpius, believing Trimalchio's anxiety about the state of the food, observes that he nearly threw his away, because it seemed to be already formed, but then hears a *vetus conviva* observe that there should be something good hiding inside (*hic nescio quid boni debet esse)*, at which point he digs around and finds the figpecker within (33). At this early point in the meal, we could give Encolpius the benefit of the doubt and argue that he has not had the exposure to Trimalchio to appreciate his tricks, at least not in the way that the more experienced diners have (Bodel 1999, 86).[118] However, at a much later point in the dinner, a dish is set down that Trimalchio explains is made entirely from one thing (*uno corpore est factum*, 69). Encolpius, curiously styling

[118] Bodel observes that: 'Trimalchio has perfected his tricks at feast after feast, so that the veteran guests know to look beyond the outward appearance of things, to find the treats or tricks they hold.' Encolpius' gullibility, and his tendency to react without thinking, make this kind of investigation a difficult task for him.

himself as *prudentissimus*,[119] begins to comment to Agamemnon that it is most likely imitation food, made from wax or even mud. Trimalchio then interrupts Encolpius' musings to explain that the dish is made entirely from pork (70). Here is an example of Encolpius both misreading and underreading. He has partially adapted to the Trimalchian experience, to the point that he suspects something is at work here, but he lacks the ability to perceive fully what is happening (Slater 1990, 75). The reason that he suspects mud or wax is because he has seen it done before at Saturnalias in Rome (69). That is, Encolpius cannot use his own powers of deduction to speculate on what the dish might be made from, but rather plucks someone else's idea from his memory and assumes that it must be correct.

This inability to exercise powers of perception stems from the same roadblock to Encolpius' role-playing ability: his masochistic persona. As section one explored, Encolpius' masochism wreaks havoc with his ability to interpret and to think rationally, and, by extension of that, his ability to exercise judgment. While elsewhere in the *Satyricon* Encolpius fails to make emotional and moral judgments – about Giton, Eumolpus, and the like – in the *Cena* Encolpius is predominantly required to make judgments about his environment and the people in it, and he does not have the intuitive capabilities or temperament not only to interpret what is happening, but to exercise those skills fully (Knight 1989, 347).

That is, as the previous example shows, even when Encolpius tries to interpret what is happening around him, he cannot fully appreciate it. This is a central facet of

[119] I would argue that the appellation Encolpius gives to himself here comes under the umbrella of the 'mythomania' that I explored in the earlier *Satyricon* chapter, where Encolpius sees himself in these roles, which enables him to attach a greater sense of importance to his own existence. Conte (1996, 130) believes that Encolpius and company enter this dinner with the plan of flaunting their intellectual superiority, in the same vein as Horace's satire about Nasideinus' dinner party (2.8): 'But unfortunately for them, Petronius has not allowed Encolpius and his companions to be like Fundanius, Varius and Viscus. He has made them feeble, enclosed in their pretentious but ineffectual scholasticism; he has made them victims of the overwhelming vulgarity of Trimalchio's world.' I agree with this point, and I think that here *prudentissimus* is Encolpius' attempt to try and gain the higher ground, but once again failing.

reading an episodic structure within the *Satyricon*, that Encolpius' masochistic gullibility, incredulity, and irrationality extends scenes longer than a more balanced or assertive narrator arguably would.[120] Trimalchio could reveal dish after dish, and Encolpius would continually be surprised and dazzled.[121] Even as he becomes increasingly less comfortable, and starts to resent the events around him, or to feel stifled by Trimalchio's contrivances, Encolpius remains, held in a kind of overwhelmed stasis, and the narrative continues on.

Before examining the final point concerning the collection of smaller narrative episodes that Encolpius' passivity enables within the *Cena*, there is one final instance of unreliable narration to consider, which is Encolpius' failure to recognise the vast differences in intellect and class between himself and Trimalchio and company. This is predominantly a combination of misevaluating, underreading, and underregarding. Encolpius theoretically has all the tools at his disposal to recognise that the people he dines amongst are not educated men, but boorish freedmen.[122] However, he is so overwhelmed by his environment, and so susceptible to Trimalchio's control, that he fails to make this ethical judgment, and, when he does make minor observations, he is

[120] Knight (1989, 336) addresses this point: 'Encolpius is an inconsistent and unreliable narrator, but it is hard to imagine how a trustworthy one could relate such diverse and disjointed matter.' Taking this point with Rimell's below, Encolpius' incompetence is critical to both the style, longevity, and substance of the episode.

[121] Rimell (2002, 44) states that: 'We laugh at Encolpius' failure to learn the language of Trimalchio's culinary representations because the alternative, his successful interpretation of each scene, would seem as inappropriate and unfunny as giving the correct answer to a joke. The comedy of the *Satyricon* relies on this fictional limitation of perspective.' I agree with Rimell's point here; not only is Encolpius' gullibility (and masochism) key to the comedy of the *Cena*, but also to its longevity: were Encolpius to react cynically and snidely to every moment Trimalchio creates, the interplay between buffoonish idiocy (Trimalchio) and gullible confusion (Encolpius) could not repeatedly occur, and one imagines that the cynical Encolpius, fed up, would simply get up and leave.

[122] Bodel (1994, 243) reads the *Cena* as a catabasis, framing Trimalchio's home as a mausoleum. He argues that: 'As uninvited guests, Encolpius and his companions come to the banquet as *umbrae*...' and (p. 251) '…posing as freeborn *scholastici*, declamation buffs (10.6), or, in Giton's case, a slave, are outsiders to this cultural milieu. That is why Petronius can represent their visit to Trimalchio's home as a catabasis: the underworld into which they have stumbled is an underworld defined by civil status, an underworld of freedmen.' I find the idea of Encolpius as an *umbra* particularly intriguing, particularly when considered in the context of his lack of animation or awareness shown throughout this scene.

unable to cumulatively consider these and pursue them to their logical conclusion.[123] In this way, the colloquial Latin of the freedmen is extremely useful to the reader, because it enables us to bypass Encolpius' failings and consider the diners in their own right.

As the opening of the *Satyricon* illustrates, along with his speech throughout the text, Encolpius is an educated man (Rankin, 1971, 19). He stands on the steps outside the colonnade, railing against the vacuous natures of schools and the 'bloated' language of orators, complaining about the role of teachers, who have allowed such language to become rife; yet even as he complains about this, he mimics the language of those he complains against, which is an immediate introduction to Encolpius' contradictory nature (Rimell 2002, 19-20). Thus, there is one thing that we should be able to assume Encolpius will know and appreciate when he walks into Trimalchio's dining room, and that is that the people he dines amongst – including, of course, Trimalchio – are not educated, aristocratic people (Schraidt 1939, 156-157). However, as he enters the dining room in such a state of agitation following the *caue canem* incident (24), and as he is so taken in by the many sights and spectacles within Trimalchio's dining room, Encolpius' already limited judgment is further impeded. Trimalchio's dining room is garish, vociferous, dazzling, creating a cacophony of experiences and atmospheres that are bound to agitate somebody like Encolpius, who has difficulty separating even banal sensory experiences, let alone extravagant ones such as this (Slater 1990, 84).

[123] Conte (1996, 125-126) discusses the intentions of Encolpius and company going into the dinner, as I have touched on earlier: '…they went to dinner confident of their assumed superiority (10.6 *tamquam scholastici ad cenam promisimus)*… caught in the dense net of money and food which Trimalchio and his cronies threw around them, the *scholastici* seem at first embarrassed, then downright terrified; the tyranny of the host keeps them passive.' Encolpius may have gone into the dinner under the impression that he could steal the limelight, as he is want to try to do elsewhere in the text, but he never has the opportunity or ability to take that spotlight from Trimalchio and the other diners. In fact, he becomes so overwhelmed that he often seems to forget that he even is intellectually superior to the men around him.

If we return to Jones' point concerning masochistic agency (2000, 204), and that a masochist must have a certain amount of agency that can be surrendered, the focal point for Encolpius' agency arguably is his education. This is particularly pertinent to reading the *Cena*, which should be where Encolpius' superior intellect shines through, compared with the freedmen that he dines with. Instead, he surrenders his agency to the experience, and in some ways shows himself to be less intelligent than some of the other diners, given how often he misunderstands (and in turn misreports) what is happening around him.

As the meal continues, Encolpius finds himself continually unable to make sense of what he sees. He uses his neighbour almost as an interpreter, asking him about the meaning behind Trimalchio's repeated cries of "*Carpe, Carpe"*, the carver whose name is also Carpus (36); and about the identity of Fortunata, whom he has noticed running around the place; and, finally, asks his neighbour why the pig was wearing a freedman's cap (41). After his neighbour scornfully explains the freedman's cap, Encolpius curses his own stupidity and decides not to ask anything further, lest he look like someone who had never dined in decent company (*inter honestos*), once again failing to recognise that he is not amongst decent company. For Encolpius, his neighbour takes on the role of a sage advisor, and appears to illustrate greater intelligence than Encolpius himself, and the distinction between knowledge and experience becomes unclear.

At a very early stage Encolpius observes, '*...pantomimi chorum, non patris familiae triclinium crederes'* (31); what Encolpius fails to realise then, and seemingly continues to fail to realise throughout the dinner, is that it is more akin to a pantomime, a confection of sounds, sights, and experiences designed by a uneducated and bumptious man, for the purpose of showing off his immense wealth, and preening

in front of his guests (Saylor 1987, 595). Encolpius is entirely taken in by Trimalchio, and in some ways that may be not only because of Encolpius' susceptibility, but because Trimalchio represents what Encolpius would like to be – not necessarily due to his wealth, which does not seem to capture Encolpius' attention in the same way that it would, say, Eumolpus – but rather the ability and the power to command the attention of the entire room, to impress and astonish them, and to be able to make a scene whenever he wants, and about whatever he wants (Häag 1983, 168).

More specifically than the tenor of the room as a whole, in Trimalchio's speech there are a myriad of errors that Encolpius narrates, but does not comment on. This is an instance of underregarding, where Encolpius has all the information to make an ethical judgment, but cannot quite synthesise the facts in front of him to their logical conclusion, in order to make a judgment. This stems from Encolpius surrendering his intellectual agency to the communal experience. Encolpius largely fails to notice or comment when Trimalchio mentions that Cassandra killed her sons, and that Daedalus shut Niobe in the Trojan horse (52).[124] Shortly after that, when Encolpius sees Fortunata whispering to Trimalchio, he assumes she is telling him not to dance, as such low fooling does not suit his dignity (52); a curious assumption, given that neither Fortunata or Trimalchio had behaved with much dignity up to this point, nor indeed do they beyond it. Trimalchio's language is also peppered with errors and clichés, for example, *fatus* instead of *fatum*, *caelus* instead of *caelum*

[124] Walsh (1970, 125-128) discusses the myriad of errors that Trimalchio makes: 'The egregious errors are only part of the point. Petronius makes much play also with Trimalchio's baffling changes of conversational direction.' These sharp and often apparently unrelated shifts are facilitated by Encolpius, who does not interrupt his report of Trimalchio's speech to comment on, or even observe, Trimalchio's collection of errors.

(Slater 1990, 148);[125] Courtney (2001, 94) notes that Trimalchio's speech is full of Grecisms and hyperurbanisms, which Encolpius does not appear to notice.[126]

Encolpius' unreliable narration coalesces with his masochism when he makes a conscious decision to disengage, to stop asking questions, and to submit to the experience of being at Trimalchio's table. Encolpius' passivity enables the narrative of this episode to be controlled essentially by others: when Encolpius makes his decision to be quiet he stops even passing much comment on what happens around him, and instead just narrates the words and actions of others. Laird (1999, 217) defines the difference between Encolpius as an observer, and Encolpius as a participant, as a 'transparent narrator' and an 'agent narrator'; that is, when Encolpius simply relates the details of others, he is acting transparently, and when acting as an agent he is actively participating. Thus, it in his role as an agent narrator that Encolpius is at his most unreliable, as we have seen, and primarily it is when he is being a transparent narrator that we are able to analyse the other characters, predominantly without Encolpius' intervention.

This transparent narration allows a series of anecdotes to be related, and the *Cena* becomes almost a series of mini-episodes within the one over-arching episode, which is representative of the *Satyricon*'s structure as a whole. Various stories are exchanged, and while often they seem to have little immediate relevance to what is happening at the time, they are told to increase the entertainment experience that Trimalchio seeks to create. Niceros' werewolf tale, for example, is told because Trimalchio asks him to do him a favour, in order to make Trimalchio happy (61). And as far as Trimalchio is concerned, if he is pleased and entertained, then his guests will be similarly pleased and entertained. In turn, Trimalchio answers Niceros' story with

[125] Slater observes that these illustrate the infrequent use of the neuter in colloquial Latin.
[126] See Boyce (1991, 99-102) for specific discussion of Trimalchio's use of hypercorrections.

his own tale (self-described as *asinus in tegulis*) about midnight hags (63), which Encolpius globally declares a resounding success, '*miramur nos et pariter credimus'* (64).

Reading the *Satyricon* involves repositioning the markers by which texts are commonly read. The narrative does not push the plot forward so much as it expands sideways: the episodes introduce new characters, we learn more about them and can perhaps add to our knowledge base as to what has happened to Encolpius in the past, but they do not necessarily push the story towards reconciliation or closure. The *Satyricon* lacks narrative milestones, such as moments of adversity from which the character can learn and grow; no opportunities to show their mettle or to prove themselves and grow as characters; and there are no points where a moral is offered which may reflect on the character or the story as a whole. Rather, the *Satyricon* offers us a series of memorable anecdotes by which to understand the world of the text and its inhabitants; stories are told for enjoyment or to illustrate wit and intelligence, such as Habinnas' werewolf story or Eumolpus' story of the Wife of Ephesus; the text delights in the transmission of itself, in exploring what happens between A and B, rather than the purpose for getting there at all.

Thus, we can see that there are several ways in which Encolpius' masochism impacts on the transmission of the *Cena* to the reader. Firstly, Encolpius, as the susceptible and overly emotional masochist, misinterprets, misreads and misunderstands what is happening around him. He conveys the atmosphere of the room and experiences of the diners as a communal experience, when in fact they are more appropriately the individual reactions of Encolpius himself. The second way in which Encolpius' masochism affects our reading of the *Cena* is when Encolpius submits to the Trimalchian experience, becoming silent and almost akin to a third-

person narrator.[127] The reader's access to Trimalchio and company opens up at this point, as we are granted relatively unhindered and unfiltered access to their speech. An episodic reading of the text embraces Encolpius' unreliability, and shows that it is Encolpius' masochistic persona that enables the meandering path of the narrative as a whole.

[127] George (1966, 358) notes that: 'The passivity of Encolpius is also useful to Petronius, in that it means that Encolpius can be a spectator when required (e.g., during the greater part of Trimalchio's dinner) without disrupting the course of events or forcing his view of them upon the reader.' When Encolpius laps into reported speech in this way, it is almost as though he ceases to be a first-person narrator, and instead allows other characters to control the narrative.

Catullus: the masochistic contract

The previous Catullus chapter explored how Catullus' masochistic persona is integral to the world that Catullus created for himself and Lesbia; this chapter will examine the power structure embedded within that construct via the scheme of the masochistic contract. While the masochistic contract requires a physical document to be drawn up and signed by both parties, as is the case in *Venus in Furs*, and no such document exists in Catullus, the lens of the masochistic contract – the mechanics and foundations behind it – offers a useful reflection on the tautological nature of Catullus' perception of his own suffering. The masochistic contract works on two levels: the perspective of the masochist, and what Nacht (1995, 19) calls the 'eyes of the beholder', that is the exterior perspective. Smirnoff (1995, 65) argues that while notionally the dynamic between a masochist and a dominant partner (whom he calls the executioner) places all the power with the executioner, who causes the suffering of the masochist, in reality all the power lies (unconsciously) with the masochist, who demands suffering from the executioner, and sets the parameters of that suffering. The masochist sees only their side of the contract, that is that they are powerless and are being tortured by the executioner. The exterior perspective shows the pressure that the masochist places on the executioner, and how ultimately this renders the executioner the powerless employee of the masochist. In this chapter I outline the masochist's perception of the contract, apply this to Catullus, and examine how this manifests in his perception of his relationship with Lesbia. Then I will outline the exterior perspective of the contract, and how ultimately the incompatibility between the two perspectives reveals Catullus as a biased narrator. Read from the exterior perspective, Catullus unknowingly but deliberately places Lesbia as the agent of his suffering, and perpetuates that suffering by holding her to a standard that she cannot meet.

Consequently, because Catullus tells his story only from the masochist's perspective, he relates their story in a way that is coloured by his masochistic perception, and by his biased view of his relationship with Lesbia. That is, Catullus' masochistic victimisation of himself creates and directs the narrative. He notionally presents a narrative that explains his predicament, and seeks to be rid of it, but which in fact perpetuates it. Catullus presents his genuine perception of his relationship with Lesbia, but because of his masochistic nature, that perception is biased. This chapter examines how Catullus pushes the reader towards a particular reading of Lesbia, one that encourages the reader to sympathise with Catullus, and to spurn Lesbia's attempts to ingratiate herself to Catullus, and in turn the reader.

I begin by outlining my strategy for reading narration within Catullus' poetry. Once again, as in the previous chapter, I focus my reading on the Catullan persona as a character, and read the Lesbia poems as a narrative arc. In this regard, I adopt Fludernik's experience-based view of narrativity (1996, 26), which proposes a narrative that does not necessarily move sequentially, but is united by emotion and experience: 'narrativity is a function of narrative texts and centres on experientiality of an anthromorphic nature.'[128] The story of the Catullan persona invites the reader to identify with the emotions that Lesbia causes him. These feelings are vividly exposed, and are designed to lead the reader towards a sympathetic response to Catullus' narrative. In this regard, Pedrick (1986, 187-88) argues that Catullan poetry is 'striking in its eagerness not simply to engage readers but actually to control their reactions to the text and hence, their understanding of it.' I point this out because it is central to my masochistic reading of Catullus' poetry. "Catullus" wants the reader to

[128] Fludernik (1996, 354) notes elsewhere that: 'some poems describe a poetic persona's perceptions… thus rendering the text equivalent to an *in nuce* first-person narrative… Poems can also depict a situation involving specific characters at a specific point in time, and they may additionally employ a great deal of descriptive realism.' Arguably, this is why Catullus' Lesbia poems of themselves constitute a narrative arc, and the Catullan persona's telling of their story constitutes narration.

see his victimisation, and to recognise the pain that Lesbia has caused him. I do not suggest that a reader must believe everything that "Catullus" says about himself or Lesbia. Both Skinner (2003, xxxiii) and Hinds (1998, 46-47) point out that no single reader will interpret textual and intertextual information in exactly the same way, and I adopt this point. My analysis will focus on how the dynamic Catullus constructs lends itself to a masochistic reading, without presuming this as the *only* reading.

My central goal here is to identify the impact that Catullus' masochism has on the narrative, by interrogating the biased perspective that his masochism has in creating it. As Fludernik (1996, 29) observes: 'Human experience typically embraces goal-oriented behaviour and activity, with its reaction to obstacles encountered on the way… All experience is therefore stored as emotionally charged remembrance, and it is reproduced in narrative form because it was memorable, funny, scary, or exciting.' Because Catullus' narrative is emotionally charged, and much of that emotion stems from his masochistic persona, his narrative is skewed, justified as it is by the emotional tropes stemming from his masochism. I explore how that bias manifests through the masochistic contract, particularly the expectations that it puts on Lesbia.

The masochistic contract represents the premise behind the masochistic relationship, and is built on the relationship between a masochist and a love object (Smirnoff 1995, 70), rather than more broadly within all masochistic interactions. A clear example of the contract appears in Sacher-Masoch's *Venus in Furs*, where Severin and Wanda sign a document that stipulates the terms of their sadomasochistic relationship: "She had drawn up a contract according to which I gave my word of honour and agree under oath to be slave, as long as she wishes…" (53) Though they do not sign the contract, its content and significance influences much of what happens subsequently within the text. From Severin's perspective, he is entirely beholden to

Wanda, and powerless to alter her behaviour (Wilke 1998, 250). Wanda, conversely, is compelled to live up to the expectations that Severin puts on her.

It is the premise behind the contract that is particularly relevant to reading Catullus. Deleuze (1989, 126) argues that by means of the masochistic contract, 'the woman is like the absolute prince who retains and multiplies his rights, while the masochist is like her subject who effectively loses his own.' That is, the masochist perceives their power to have been given over to the executioner.[129] This is comparable to Catullus purposefully surrendering his patriarchal powers to Lesbia, which I explored in the earlier Catullus chapter. Catullus moves himself and Lesbia out of the traditional Roman social structure, effectively creating a power structure with Lesbia at its apex. As we have seen, there are consequences for this action as the relationship between Catullus and Lesbia continues. He has removed their relationship from Rome, and its associated social rules and mores, but in doing so he has taken away his own powers as a Roman man. That is why in poems 11 and 58, for example, we see Catullus trying to recoup some of what he has lost. Catullus here is trying to recoup the power that he thinks that he has lost by means of sacrificing his patriarchal rights to Lesbia. Ultimately, his attempts to reintroduce Roman values fails, because he still feels that he is powerless, and that he is unable to reclaim that power back for himself. Later in this chapter I will explore how this comes through clearly in poem 76, where Catullus begs for someone to take away his love for Lesbia, believing that it is beyond his powers alone.

[129] Jones (2000, 204), building on Deleuze's point, points out that the critical question in this construction becomes 'not whether one occupies a passive relationship to disciplinary authority [here Lesbia], but *how* own came to occupy that position. Masochism demands, as a precondition, a certain amount of agency that can be relinquished… It does mean that the masochistic subject must have some power – gender, racial or social position… which can be sacrificed.' The masochist willingly hands over power to the executioner, effectively making them wield that power against the masochist.

Kazarian (2010, 98) points out that the consequence of the masochistic contract is that 'this contractual liquidation of the patriarchal structure of authority will displace the hero and his beloved in relation to the principles according to which their subjectivity and their agency have heretofore been constituted, leaving them with no structuring instance in these regards except for the fantasy itself.' Catullus rejects the Roman patriarchal structure in poems 5 and 7, when he urges Lesbia to disregard the *senes* and to keep their love as their exclusive secret. From the exterior perspective, this gesture is symbolic, but for Catullus it is genuine: he has handed over that power to Lesbia. Likewise, we saw some of the ramifications of this 'liquidation of the patriarchal structure' in poems 11 and 58, when Lesbia does not fit into Catullus' idealised fantasy, and Catullus feels emasculated (11.12-24) by Lesbia, and in 58 when he lashes out at her infidelity (58.4-5).

If we return briefly to poems 5 and 7, the poems in which Catullus defines his love for Lesbia, the only time Lesbia's voice is heard in these two poems is her reported question of *quot basiationes* at the very beginning of poem 7.[130] Even in this, of course, Lesbia's words are really Catullus', and the reader can believe or disbelieve that they come directly from her. For the purposes of this chapter, I treat Lesbia's words as her words, to analyse the picture of Lesbia that Catullus seeks to convey. Elsewhere, Lesbia's thoughts and feelings are valued and mediated by Catullus. When she is allowed "speech" – that is, when Catullus attributes speech to her indirectly – it is so he can consider her words and find them wanting. In doing this, Catullus can present an image to the reader that shows Lesbia as mendacious and cruel. This is the masochistic perspective at work: Catullus seeks to show the reader that he is tortured

[130] This is the only time that Lesbia's "voice" is heard in these defining poems, and as Adler (1981, 134) has observed, the act of asking the question at all appears to be an attempt to dampen the passions of Catullus. It also arguably indicates a desire to quantify a limit to their relationship, and arguably is an indication that Lesbia did not agree to this limitless love that Catullus proposes, through which he seeks to bind her.

by Lesbia. It is not that he is deliberately portraying Lesbia in a negative way; it is that he is presenting to the reader his perception of what Lesbia does to him. He believes that this perception of her is correct, and that by illustrating it as such, the reader will rightly empathise with him, and with the pain that Lesbia has caused him.

I now turn to the exterior perspective of the masochistic contract; that is, what is happening beyond the narrowed and biased perspective of the masochist alone. This is particularly revealing in terms of the power dynamic between the masochist and the executioner, and how the executioner is subsequently painted by the masochist. To return once more to Smirnoff (1995, 69): 'the masochist is not seeking to be killed or destroyed, but to be branded. Not by the absolute power of the other, but by the fictitious power that he himself has bestowed on the executioner: a power that the victim has, by way of contract, forced on the executioner, who can exercise it only at the victim's order.' That is, Catullus may see Lesbia as the cause and root of all his suffering, but that power to cause suffering comes ultimately from Catullus. The evidence that he gives to the reader of his suffering comes entirely from his own construction, and the power that Lesbia notionally wields against him comes from Catullus himself. As with his negative portrayal of Lesbia more generally, this awareness of the 'fictitious power' that he has bestowed on Lesbia is subconscious or unconscious: Catullus remains firmly of the opinion that Lesbia is the one that holds all the power. It is for this reason that Catullus' narrative is biased: he turns the narrative against Lesbia, without knowing or believing that this is what he is doing. Thus, this chapter will read the poems in two ways: from the perspective of Catullus' victimisation, his attempts to garner the reader's sympathy, and to prove that his reading of Lesbia is the correct one; and from the exterior perspective, which will

show how Catullus' fictitious victimisation is entirely his own doing, and how ultimately Lesbia is the real victim.

Catullus has designed his relationship with Lesbia in such a way that her task is limitless. She must love him as he loves her, or she is not meeting her side of the bargain. When she fails to live up to these limitless expectations, he can turn the narrative against her, making her task even more difficult to fulfil. Even when she tries to say the right thing (for example, poem 70 and 72), Catullus will step in to assure the reader that her words do not meet the standards that he requires, and are thus dispositive of her love for him. He creates a narrative that will always be against Lesbia, and in favour of himself.[131]

To pursue this idea further, I will now move through several of the Lesbia poems, to show how Catullus tries to position the reader to believe his interpretation of Lesbia, so that when he tells the reader about the ways that Lesbia mistreats him, the reader will sympathise with him, and believe his negative portrayal of Lesbia. Catullus needs the reader to believe that his victimisation is real, because that is how Catullus himself feels. He, convinced as he is by the dynamic of their relationship, wholeheartedly believes that he is her victim. This means that Catullus genuinely believes that his understanding of Lesbia is correct, and that he conveys his perception of her accurately to the reader. I start with poems 92 and 83, which encourage the reader to believe that Catullus understands exactly why Lesbia behaves the way that she does.[132] If the reader believes what Catullus says in these poems,

[131] Fitzgerald (1995, 135) notes [speaking of poem 109] that 'the poem does allude to what lies outside it, and defines its own discourse against the putative speech of another. Lesbia, fickle and false, plays a strategic role in these poems in relation to Catullus the poet, whose extravagances of language we are expected to accept just as much as we suspect Lesbia's.' Arguably, this reading extends beyond poem 109, and is true of many of the later Lesbia poems, where she is used to facilitate the image that Catullus seeks to build, where his word is far more valuable and dependable than Lesbia's.

[132] Holoka (1975, 119) points out within these poems 'we are witnessing a mental event: an act of therapeutic self-deception.' This is certainly right, but the intimate nature of personal poetry means that even as he seeks to deceive himself, Catullus tries to draw the reader in with him.

then arguably the reader is more likely to believe Catullus when he invites the reader to disbelieve Lesbia in other poems – 72, for example. Poem 92 is a clear example of Catullus trying to convince the reader of the trustworthiness of his version of events, passing off his reading of Lesbia to the reader as psychological insight:

> *Lesbia mi dicit semper male nec tacet unquam*
> *de me: Lesbia me dispeream nisi amat.*
> *quo signo? quia sunt totidem mea: deprecor illam*
> *adsidue, verum dispeream amo.* (92)

> Lesbia never stops her constant slandering of me,
> but I'll be damned if Lesbia doesn't love me.
> How do I know? Because I do it too: I abuse her,
> but I'm damned if I don't love her.

Feeney (2009, 34-35) identifies this poem as a paradox epigram, which presents the paradox in the first couplet, and the question and answer to the paradox in the second couplet. Here Catullus attempts to explain away any conflict between him and Lesbia by justifying his own behaviour *and* hers, thus passing on his interpretation of Lesbia to the reader. He makes a value judgment about her behaviour, by interrogating his own. The mirroring of *dispeream nisi amat* in line 2, and *dispeream nisi amo* in line 4 creates a clear parallel between Catullus and Lesbia, and by extension of that a sense of equality between them. Reading this poem in combination with poem 83, wherein Catullus mocks Lesbia's husband for taking delight in her mockery of Catullus,

illustrates that Catullus' reflection in 92 is not a spontaneous rationalisation, but an opinion that Catullus has formulated over some period of time:

> *Lesbia mi praesente viro mala plurima dicit:*
> *haec illi fatuo maxima laetitia est.*
> *mule, nihil sentis. si nostri oblita taceret,*
> *sana esset: nunc quod gannit et obloquitur,*
> *non solum meminit, sed, quae multa acrior est res,*
> *irata est: hoc est, uritur et loquitur.* (83)

> In her husband's presence, Lesbia says so many
> bad things about me: this gives the fool the greatest joy.
> Mule, you understand nothing!
> If she forgot me and were silent, she would be sound:
> now, because she growls and rails, not only does she remember,
> but, what is far more to the point, she is angry:
> that is, she burns and she speaks.

Here, Catullus explains away Lesbia's vitriol, and simultaneously casts himself as superior to Lesbia's husband, suggesting that Catullus understands Lesbia as no one else does, comparable to the *nulla potest mulier tantum se dicere amatam vere, quantum a me Lesbia amata mea es* (no woman can say truly that she has been loved as much as Lesbia has been loved by me) that opens poem 87. Brady (1977, 50) argues that the narrator can present distorted information in order to deceive themselves, rather than to deliberately misrepresent information: 'an emotional

involvement with another (which we call love) or with oneself (which we call narcissism) may produce a distorted view of, and therefore a distorted presentation of, reality, thus increasing the unreliability of the narrator, this time not through conscious deceit but through unconscious deceit.' Unconscious deceit is a useful way to understand the masochistic psyche as a whole, because the masochist is unaware of the limited nature of their perception of the masochistic relationship. Catullus uses poems 83 and 92 as a type of self-assurance: he tries to convince himself, and his audience, of Lesbia's attachment to him by reading her behaviour in a positive light, and seeing it as a reflection of his own behaviour and feelings. Holoka (1975, 120) points out that *hoc est* particularly speaks to this kind of self-assurance '… [it] has the ring of nervous assertion… "that's it" = "that *must* be it" ("I will not allow myself to believe it is otherwise").' In a masochistic sense, it is important for Catullus to frame Lesbia's behaviour in a positive light. He cannot fall victim to someone who was not convincing to begin with: that is, he – and the reader – must try to see some credibility in Lesbia's behaviour, and in his reception of it.[133] Then, when her words and actions lose their credibility, Catullus' victimisation is both believable and painful.

I refer back at this point to Bright's assessment of Catullus' myopia, wherein Lesbia is held to one standard and he to another (1976, 110). Bright's point refers to Catullus' characterisation of Lesbia as *moecha* in poem 11, and indeed Catullus' attacks on Lesbia throughout the poems are predominantly against her infidelity (e.g. *cum suis moechis,* 11.17; *glubit magnanimi Remi nepotes*, 58.4). As I have mentioned earlier, qualities like *fides, foedus*, and *amicitia* are given great weight by Catullus,

[133] Dettmer (1997, 194) argues that 92 appears to be an intensification of the message that Catullus seeks to convey in poem 83, because 'Catullus claims here that Lesbia is always disparaging him.' This intensification serves to support Catullus' claims elsewhere to be victimised by Lesbia: she has drawn him in by a pattern of increasing and intensifying behaviour, which leads him to believe her love for him.

and are particularly prominent within the Lesbia poems (Nelis 2012, 10-11).[134] Catullus often responds to perceived breaches of these qualities through invective. Lateiner (1977, 25) argues that 'obscenity is therapeutic because it clarifies Catullus' feelings and grants relief from acute discomfort.' This is a compelling idea, particularly when considered in the context of Catullus using invective to explore and elucidate his feelings. In poem 16, for example, Catullus attacks Furius and Aurelius (*pedicabo vos et irrumabo*, 16.1) because they have called him soft. Read in the wake of poems 5, 7, and 11, Catullus goes on the offensive and 'by threatening vigorous sexual action he repudiates the suggestion that the slighter amorous action of kissing shows his effeminacy' (Hutchinson 2012, 74). Catullus uses invective as a defensive mechanism; he perceives that Furius and Aurelius have abrogated their social contract, and he has 'turned the tables on them' (Sandy 1971, 52).

Arguably, in poems 83 and 92 Catullus takes this process of invective rationalisation a step further: not only does he attempt to persuade himself, and in turn the reader, that Lesbia still loves him, but he seeks to show definite proof of this by citing Lesbia's use of invective, which he then relates back to his own behaviour, and, by extension, that Lesbia similarly uses invective as a defence mechanism. Thus, like Catullus, Lesbia lashes out defensively; she feels things so deeply (cf. *uritur,* 83.6) that love and hate can become synonymous. Catullus' susceptibility to buying into his own reading of Lesbia is important to the way that he buys into the fictitious power that he feels Lesbia possesses, as per the masochistic contract. If Catullus is right that

[134] Nelis notes: 'Catullus speaks of his erotic relationship with Lesbia as *foedus* and employs the vocabulary of *amicitia* and *urbanitas* in describing its course and the social milieu in which it evolves. In doing so he is exploiting in highly insightful and complex ways the language and ideology of social performance employed by the Roman… Overall, the erotic strain in Catullus' work should be seen as subservient to his broader social and political concerns and the vision of the Roman world he constructs.' I am going to return to how ultimately the notion of *foedus* fails later in this chapter, in examining poem 76, but at this point it is useful to note that it is important for Catullus to lend legitimacy to these social concepts within the Lesbia poems, before he can show Lesbia being the cause of them falling apart. Poems 83 and 92 in part seek to do that, by notionally showing the mirroring or the equality within their relationship.

Lesbia uses invective defensively, then he must be right when he believes that she is lying to him, and thus is right when he believes she does not love him, and that she betrays him.

Poem 72 is a fruitful starting point for how Catullus' 'understanding' of Lesbia influences his narrative, portraying Lesbia as his torturer, and himself as her innocent victim. In this poem, and others, Lesbia has breached Catullus' trust, and breached the tenets upon which their relationship is built. In order to show how Lesbia has done this, Catullus once again contrasts the two of them, but this time in order to show his constancy against Lesbia's inconstancy.[135]

Dicebas quondam solum te nosse Catullum,
Lesbia, nec prae me velle tenere Iovem.
Dilexi tum te non tantum ut vulgus amicam,
sed pater ut gnatos diligit et generos.
nunc te cognovi: quare etsi impensius uror,
multo mi tamen es vilior et levior.
qui potis est? inquis. quod amantem iniuria talis
cogit amare magis, sed bene velle minus. (72)

Once you said that you knew Catullus alone, Lesbia,

[135] At times Catullus broadens his comparison of the two of them, by bringing into his comparison the men that Lesbia seems to prefer to him, to show how he is better than them as well. Poem 83 is an example of that, where Catullus positions himself as the man who knows and understands Lesbia, and not her husband. Minkova (2002, 260) observes that poems 69 and 71 are intertwined with poems 70 and 72, and through them Catullus disparages his love rivals: Rufus in 69 and an unnamed man in 71. Richlin (1992, 153) notes that through these poems Catullus seeks to victimize the men: 'Some of the victims… are attacked in such a primitive invective that they and their crimes fade into the background… The content of these poems amounts to a stream of vituperation and primary obscenities, beautifully structured.' This arguably forms part of the masochistic displacement of responsibility: helplessly victimised by Lesbia and unable to escape her, Catullus seeks solace in placing blame on not only her, but her lovers, whom he does have the power to lash out at verbally.

and that you would not embrace even Jove before me.

I loved you then, not just as a commoner loves his wife,

but as a father loves his sons and sons-in-law.

Now, I know you: so although I burn more,

for all that, for me you are much cheaper and lighter.

How is that possible, you ask?

Because such an injury drives a lover to love more, but to like less.

.

Here we have Lesbia's voice notionally appearing, as Catullus explains to the reader what Lesbia has said to him, in an attempt to prove her love. But Catullus knows better, and seeks to show this to the reader. *'Nunc te cognovi'* is critical in this regard, because through it Catullus once again asserts his perceptive abilities. Arguably, he admits some fallibility, in the sense of the notion of a realisation that is built into the expression, but assures the reader that *now* he understands Lesbia, and understands exactly what she is doing to him. The merely carnal nature of Lesbia's love for Catullus is contrasted with the deeper and more binding love that Catullus states that he possesses in lines 3 and 4. This juxtaposition is sheeted home by *nunc te cognovi*, where Catullus' apparent understanding of Lesbia is laid bare: he has surrendered everything for her, and this is the best that she can offer, and it is this carnal token of affection that makes him realise her fickleness, in comparison to his own verisimilitude.

Catullus' use of *uror* in line five is noteworthy: firstly, it carries the sense of not only burning with passion, but being entirely consumed by it, once again invoking this idea of *vesanus Catullus* that we saw in poem 7*,* and thus tapping once again into this idea of Catullus' limitless love for Lesbia, and the masochistic consequences that

go along with that. Catullus is being consumed by his love for Lesbia, and by his inability to escape that love. Secondly, *urere* is the same verb that Catullus uses to characterise Lesbia in poem 83 (*uritur et loquitur,* 83.6). There, Lesbia, so consumed with her love for Catullus, expressed that love through angry, burning passion; here, Catullus uses *urere* to express how his all-consuming love for Lesbia is becoming increasingly more destructive.

Catullus wants the reader to see Lesbia in the same way that he does: she is both *vilior* and *levior*, not only because she has betrayed Catullus, but because she is inferior to Catullus, which in turn solidifies the notion of being betrayed by Lesbia.[136] She could not commit to the same degree as Catullus, she could not promise him truthfully, as he promised her, and thus she is lower and lesser than he (Wray 2001, 111). Catullus then brings this together in the final line, where he recognises that – entirely through Lesbia's faults, of course – he may not love her less, but he certainly likes her less.

This splitting of *amor* and *amicitia* between Catullus and Lesbia creates what Miller (2003, 58) calls a 'schizophrenic text', identifiable by the impossibility of reconciling *amor* with social obligations such as *pietas*, *officium*, *amicitia*, and *fides*, which I in part discussed in the earlier Catullus chapter in relation to poem 109. As I mentioned previously, these are all customs to which Catullus gives primacy, and

[136] Gutzwiller (2012, 82) notes that: 'Catullus, casting himself as the betrayed in both 70 and the similar 72 where he names Lesbia as the betrayer… identifies the pathetic first-person voice… as the starting point for his self-representation as lover.' In poem 70, of course, Catullus urges the reader to treat Lesbia's words as worthless, just as he does in poem 72: *sed mulier cupido quod dicit amanti in vento et rapida scribere oportet aqua* (that which a woman says to a desiring lover should be written in the wind and fast-running water, 70.3-4). Catullus urges two central points on the reader through this appraisal of her words: she betrays him by lying, and she betrays him through adultery. The 'pathetic first-person voice' that Gutzwiller identifies assists Catullus to portray himself as the helpless victim of her betrayal. In this regard Dettmer (1997, 177) notes that in these two poems: 'Catullus makes quite clear that Lesbia's commitment to him was essentially verbal. Lesbia said what she thought her lover wanted to hear.' Catullus does not leave room to entertain the notion that Lesbia's words may have had some sincerity, because it is only ever Catullus' words that carry sincerity. When he says that she is lying, he should always be preferred.

thus, because of their importance to him, he expects them from others and becomes easily incensed when he perceives that someone has abrogated their moral obligations. This is particularly evident in poems directed towards his friends, such as 16, 21 and 23. This expectation of reciprocal *benefacta* is reminiscent of what we saw with Justine, who was unable to separate the reality of the libertines from her expectation that they would behave with the same Catholic virtues as she did, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Catullus expects people to behave as he wants them to, and as he perceives that he himself does, and is angered and disappointed when this does not happen.

I conclude by examining poem 76, as this is the poem that represents the culmination of the various elements of Catullus' masochistic persona. It is also in this poem that the split between Catullus' perception of his suffering, and the exterior perspective of the masochistic contract, becomes clear. Skinner (2003, 74) notes that 'the controlling moral term is now *pietas*', which is essential to the way the poem is framed, encouraging the reader to focus on Catullus' *pietas*, as opposed to Lesbia's *culpae:*

> *Si qua recordanti benefacta priora voluptas*
> *est homini, cum se cogitat esse pium,*
> *nec sanctam violasse fidem, nec foedere in ullo*
> *divum ad fallendos numine abusum homines,*
> *multa parata manent in longa aetate, Catulle,*
> *ex hoc ingrato gaudia amore tibi.* (76.1-6)
>
> If there is any pleasure for a man, in recalling former good deeds,

when he thinks he has been pious, has not broken a sacred promise,
nor in any contract abused the gods to fool men,
then many pleasures wait for you, in this long lifetime,
Catullus, from this ungrateful love.

Miller (1994, 131-132) argues that it is within poem 76 that Catullus' attempts to recoup public values into a private setting fails: 'the public meaning of *foedus* re-emerges and betrays Catullus' claim to ethical purity.' That is, in the process of trying to carry over the ethical connotations of *foedus* into an erotic scenario that does not support it, Catullus reveals his own failure. Conte (1994, 40) points out that this process of what he calls 'transmogrification' does not necessarily fail because the public meaning does not carry over, 'since values – ideas and words – can return only if they are susceptible to transformation.' In poem 109, for example, Catullus tries to carry over social and political concepts intrinsic in *sanctae foedus amicitiae* (109.6). *Foedus* fails in 76 not necessarily because the concepts cannot be transformed, but because Catullus fails, because ultimately Catullus is the agent of his own suffering, and were he not to fail, he would not be a masochist. Poem 76 is a clear example of Catullus' masochistic passivity at work, compounded by his masochistic displacement of responsibility.

Catullus expresses hope, in the opening lines, that there is some pleasure in reviewing past good actions. He points out the various good things that he has done, even though Lesbia, seemingly, does not appreciate them (*ingrato amore*). This is Catullan manipulation hard at work: reminding the reader once again of his good qualities, compared with Lesbia's negative qualities, and highlighting his

victimisation.[137] The reader is invited to empathise with Catullus' misery, caused exclusively by Lesbia. *Foedus* here fails because the notion of equity or balance that is arguably implicit within it does not exist.[138] Catullus' misery is at the expense of Lesbia, and she is offered no defence, instead being dismissed as ungrateful and unrequited. This is the same kind of masochistic displacement of responsibility that we have seen elsewhere: an outright refusal to engage in introspection, and instead foisting the blame onto another. Catullus would have the reader believe that the equality does not exist because Lesbia has all the power, but the reality is that it is Catullus alone who has the power.[139]

It is this refusal to take responsibility and to self-interrogate that negates the notion of *fides* that Catullus tries to put forward. Adler (1981, 36) observes that *pietas* fails here because 'past *pietas* evidently does not bring present pleasure, for Catullus was *pius* in the past and has no pleasure now.' I do not disagree with this idea, but I do think it can be taken further. Past actions aside, here Catullus outwardly 'engages' in a reflective process, but that reflective process is constrained to what Lesbia has done to him. His consideration of his own behaviour is limited to his admirable past

[137] Dettmer (1997, 179) observes the link between poem 76 and the '*omnia sunt ingrata*' of 73.3, commenting: 'In both poems, benevolence, again with regard to Lesbia, suffers a fate similar to gratitude: all Catullus' efforts have gone unrewarded.' This is indeed the message that Catullus tries hard to convey, in order to see poem 76 as the poem where Catullus gives up all hope that Lesbia will change. Fitzgerald (1995, 127) also comments that: 'The poem's audience finds its position defined in relation on the one hand to the thankless Lesbia and on the other to the powerful gods.' In the midst of this, Catullus presents himself as the powerless one, trapped between two opposing forces.

[138] Ross (1969, 90) notes that Catullus 'has portrayed his affair with Lesbia in the terminology of a political alliance: it is to be an *amicitia*, a *foedus*, based on *fides,* the concrete expressions of which are the mutual *benevolentia* and *benefacta* of the two parties… When this relationship is broken, the metaphor is shattered by reality.' While I do not disagree with Ross' point, I would particularly like to focus on the notion of mutual *benevolentia* and *benefacta* for the remainder of this chapter, because this idea of mutuality is intrinsic to Catullus' perception of what went wrong with Lesbia, specifically that Lesbia did not offer or show it to him. The reader is asked to accept this, despite having no proof of either parties' *benefacta* or *fides*, only the words of Catullus himself, which urges us to accept that – at its most simplistic level – is good and Lesbia is bad. I reiterate here Fitzgerald's point (1995, 135) that we are supposed to accept Catullus' 'extravagances of language', even as we reject Lesbia's.

[139] In this regard, Fromm (1941, 161) reflects on the masochistic relationship in this way: 'Love is based on equality and freedom. If it is based on subordination and loss of integrity of one partner, it is masochistic dependence, regardless of how the relationship is rationalised.'

behaviour (*haec a te dictaque factaque sunt*). Combining word and action also gestures towards the disunity in Lesbia's behaviour: she may say the right things (e.g. 70.1-2), but she is lying, because when given the opportunity she will betray him (e.g. 58.4-5). Catullus, on the other hand, so he would have us believe, both says and does the right thing. He is the constant victim of his executioner.

In the middle of the poem, Catullus tries to exhort himself to give upon Lesbia (*difficile est longum subito deponere amorem; difficile est, verum hoc qua libet efficias*, 76.13-14). Ultimately, this is a self-indulgent form of *renuntiatio amoris*, because it is not something that Catullus is actively willing to do for himself,[140] because it is not something that he really wants to do. Successfully giving up on Lesbia would end his suffering, and his identity with Lesbia is constructed around his suffering. He claims shortly after that he must give up on Lesbia, whether it is possible or not (*hoc facias, sive id non pote sive pote*, 76.16). From the exterior perspective of the masochistic contract, it is patently possible, because Catullus' suffering is of his own doing, and comes from himself, not from Lesbia; for Catullus himself, he believes it is not possible because Lesbia has rendered him ineffective, unable to change the course of his own story.

Despite his remonstrations, he goes on to ask to be saved, rather than to do it himself:

> *o di, si vestrum est misereri, aut si quibus unquam*
>
> *extremam iam ipsa in morte tulistis opem,*

[140] Fitzgerald (1995, 126) comments that: 'Catullus… has not been able to take control of the struggle in which he is engaged; he seems to be speaking for his own benefit, summoning up words in the vain hope that with them will come, paradoxically, the willpower to stop.' There are parallels here with the same kind of passivity that Catullus showed in poem 8, where he urged himself to forget about Lesbia, but ultimately did not have the control or the power to follow through on his self-remonstrations. Poem 76 is almost an intensified form of this wish to be rid of Lesbia, but Catullus' apparent powerlessness is highlighted even more powerfully, as are the consequences of what Lesbia has done to him.

me miserum adspicite et, si vitam puriter egi,

eripite hanc pestem perniciemque mihi!

hei mihi subrepens imos ut torpor in artus

expulit ex omni pectore laetitias.

non iam illud quaero, contra ut me diligat illa,

aut, quod non potis est, esse pudica velit:

ipse valere opto et taetrum hunc deponere morbum.

o di, reddite mi hoc pro pietate mea.

Oh gods, if you are able to have pity,

or if at any time you have brought help, finally,

to one at the point of death, look on my misery,

and if I have had a pure life,

tear out of me this disease and calamity!

Alas, like a torpor it creeps into my joints,

and expels all joy from my heart.

Now, I do not ask that she love me as I love her,

or, what is impossible, that she be chaste:

I wish to be strong and to put aside this foul illness.

Oh gods, give me this for my piety.

There are similarities here with the kind of passivity Encolpius showed during the Quartilla episode. He too could only think of being rescued, rather than rescuing himself. Through this passivity, Catullus keeps a firm hand on his depiction of himself and Lesbia. Skinner (2003, 78) observes that 'epithets like *morbus* and,

especially, *pestis* are attached both to behaviour that threatens the social order and to individuals perpetrating it… we may infer that what has been destroyed in the speaker's mind is not just one private compact but an entire system of social interchange based upon mutual obligation.' Through this language, Catullus seeks to keep Lesbia's faults in the forefront of the reader's mind. Compounding this is the juxtaposition of Lesbia's chastity and the idea of impossibility: *quod non potis est, esse pudica velit*.

The framing of the poem also reinforces this delineation between the two. By opening and closing the poem by reference to his own *pietas*, Catullus 'reminds' the reader that even after all Lesbia has put him through, he remains loyal and morally upright. This juxtaposition of *pietas* and *culpa* is similar to the strategy that Catullus employed in poem 75.[141] Catullus opens that poem by focusing on what Lesbia's actions have reduced him to (*huc est mens deducta tua mea, Lesbia, culpa*, 75.1/ my mind has been reduced to this, Lesbia, through your fault), before addressing the role that he has played in what has occurred between them. This role, of course, is a blameless one:

> *...atque ita se officio perdidit ipsa suo,*
> *ut iam nec bene velle queat tibi, si optuma fias,*
> *nec desistere amare, omnia si facias*. (75.2-4)
>
> …and has so destroyed itself by my own kindness,

[141] Wray (2001, 112) reads the Lesbia epigrams as being 'petulantly self-righteous and hyperbolically self-aggrandising.' Further, he argues that: 'A male audience is implicitly but palpably present in the epigrams to Lesbia. Their speaker even seems often to turn away from her to address his claims of all-surpassing amatory excellence to them.' Arguably, this is consistent with my point that Catullus seeks to push home a negative comparison between himself and Lesbia. I do not necessarily think the epigrams have to be aimed towards a male audience, perhaps more generally just an audience that will buy into the image Catullus is propounding.

that it could not wish you well, if you were good,

and could not stop loving you, if you were everything.

Here Lesbia's *culpa* is contrasted with Catullus' *officium*, to illustrate once again Catullus' virtue (McGushin 1967, 90). The final two lines highlight Catullus' masochistic passivity: he may be so disenchanted that he is unable to like her (and, arguably, by extension, to respect her), but he does not have the power to stop loving her. Here, as in 76, Catullus positions himself as the powerless one, and Lesbia as the person wielding the power; in reality, the powerlessness is illusory: Catullus gives it to Lesbia and ensures his own victimisation.

Narration in Catullus is a carefully constructed picture of the power dynamic within Catullus and Lesbia's relationship. Notionally, Catullus has handed over all power to Lesbia, which he believes she mercilessly wields against him, causing him great suffering and misery. However, reading Catullus' narrative through the lens of the masochistic contract shows that the power Lesbia wields is an illusion: all the power ultimately lies with Catullus, who makes himself Lesbia's victim. At the same time as he focuses on his own misery, he paints Lesbia as a Dorian Gray-type figure, whom Catullus urges the reader to see as increasingly cruel and cold, while the real "Lesbia" is hidden entirely from the reader's view, concealed behind Catullus' rendering of her. His narrative is both biased and intrinsically masochistic: he is passive, refusing to do anything to alter his own situation, and he displaces responsibility, instead placing it upon Lesbia and her various lovers. Understanding masochistic narration in Catullus means appreciating the masochistic bias Catullus injects into the narrative, and how ultimately all responsibility for what Catullus expresses lies with him, rather than with his representation of Lesbia.

Thyestes: mimesis and masochism

This chapter approaches unreliability in a different way to the previous chapters. Here I argue that while the masochistic Thyestes possesses the same unreliable traits that we have seen so far, the nature and structure of the text means that Thyestes does not have enough control over the action to become an unreliable narrator. Narrative is cumulative in drama: the viewer has access to multiple voices and has greater licence to evaluate characters through their appearance, speech, and how they interact with other characters. In *Thyestes*, multiple factors have determined Thyestes' fate before he walks on stage: firstly, mythical precedent, which guarantees the outcome of the play, though not necessarily the route by which it is arrived at; and, secondly, the prologue, in which the Fury has set in motion the events that are to come. This means that no matter what Thyestes himself says, the reader/viewer knows that he will return home, and he will fall prey to Atreus' plan and consume his children. However, Thyestes' behaviour in this intervening period is integral to how he is perceived, particularly in contrast to Atreus. Thyestes' masochism makes him a difficult character to understand or to believe; conversely, Atreus is consistent and persuasive: his actions mirror his speech. This chapter examines Thyestes' masochistic behaviour, and how this exhibits inconstancy and thus pseudo-unreliability, before examining the nature of narrative in drama, and how Atreus possesses greater narrative power than Thyestes, akin to the stage manager-type role of the Fury in the prologue.

Thyestes' vacillating, passive, and at times paradoxical behaviour, does not have the same impact on the narrative as Encolpius' and Justine's masochistic unreliability has on their respective narratives. There are several reasons for this, most of which stem from the nature of narrative itself. Chatman (1990, 117-118)

acknowledges that reading drama as narrative requires an abstracted or broad reading: 'If we adopt an appropriately broad sense of the term, mimetic forms – dramas, films, ballets – are just as much "narrated" as short stories and novels.' One of the key differences is the exposure to different voices, and the levels of narrative immersion that the reader or viewer experiences. As Rosenmeyer (2002, 98) notes: 'The character of written narrative fiction speaks to the individual reader who, if engaged, is readily induced to reflect on what he reads; the character of drama speaks to a collective listenership which, though engaged, is allowed little time to reflect.' In a novel like *Justine* or the *Satyricon* we have sustained exposure to a single voice, and it is easier to identify any flaws or difficulties inherent in that single voice; but in drama we have a myriad of characters to assess, and a far shorter time to recognise inconsistencies or strengths within those characters.[142]

Chatman's argument for the presence of narrative in drama is the points of commonality between it and more traditional narrative forms (1990, 117): 'Plays and novels share the common features of a chrono-logic of events, a set of characters, and a setting. Therefore, at a fundamental level they are all stories. The fact that one kind of story is told (diegesis) and the other shown (mimesis) is secondary. By "secondary" I do not mean that the difference is inconsequential. It is just that it is lower in the hierarchy of text distinctions than the difference between Narrative and the other text-types.'[143] It is the distinct features of diegesis and mimesis that I turn to now, in order to illustrate why Thyestes, although he shares the same unreliable

[142] Nünning and Sommer (2008, 339) observe that: '…diegetic narrativity foregrounds the act of narration rather than the narrated storyworld… Mimetic narrativity foregrounds "the story frame" rather than "the telling frame". For further discussion of this point, see Fludernik (1996, 340 ff.).
[143] Nünning and Sommer (2008, 332) similarly point out that: 'narrative elements in drama including, e.g. audience address, messenger reports, and metalepsis… support the view that drama by no means lacks a communicative level of narrative transmission.'

characteristics as our other narrators, does not himself have the power to disrupt the narrative.

Dobrov (2001, 5) observes that: 'The chief currency of tragic composition is what we call myth, the traditional legends handed down orally, in art, and in the various genres of pre-dramatic poetry. Tragedy regularly transforms this material from a more-or-less linear narrative into a three-dimensional play whose metafictional qualities are *inevitable*…'[144] This three-dimensionality gives the reader/viewer a greater point of privilege than what they may receive in a novel, where our perspective is restricted to what the narrator sees, and what he or she chooses to divulge that they see. As Goffman (1974, 135) notes: '…members of the audience in their capacity as onlookers, as official eavesdroppers, are accorded by the playwright a specific information state relative to the inner events of the drama, and this state necessarily is different from the playwright's and in all likelihood from that of various characters in the play…' In the case of *Thyestes*, both Dobrov's and Goffman's points aid in our understanding of what is unfolding. Mythologically speaking, we have an exterior knowledge of what will happen within the story; and, perspective-wise, we have the benefit of what both the Fury and Atreus have hold us, and from that we know that Thyestes is right to worry.

Nünning and Sommer (2008, 337) examine the intersection of diegetic and mimetic narrativity in drama: '…plays do not just represent narratives (i.e. a series of events), they also stage narratives in that, more often than not, they make storytelling, i.e. the act of telling narratives, theatrical. In other words, plays not only represent series of events, they also represent "acts of narration", with characters serving as

[144] Dobrov here speaks specifically of the development of fifth-century Greek tragedy, but arguably the same applies to Roman tragic theatre.

intradiegetic storytellers.' Considering Thyestes and Atreus as intradiegetic storytellers is a useful indicator of the power that they wield.

Much of Atreus' power as a storyteller comes from his continuity of character, and his apparent awareness of his own potential. As Schiesaro (2003, 49) points out, there is a quasi-authorial element to Atreus' character, as he plots out how to take revenge on Thyestes, and then assumes the necessary role in order to carry this out. Atreus moves seamlessly from each role: architect of the plan, "loving" brother, executioner, and finally victor. As he moves through each stage of the drama, Atreus makes it clear to the reader/viewer what he is doing. Returning to the scene where Thyestes and Atreus are reunited, Atreus' transition from gleeful derision (491-506) to shamming the role of loving brother is marked clearly by '*praestetur fides*', making it clear that he is assuming a role.[145] He plays this role successfully, though not spectacularly. However, there is no need to do anything beyond what he does, because the person he seeks to trick is all too ready to accept what is offered. As Davis (2003, 46) has observed, the exchange between Thyestes and Atreus at 534-542 covers much the same ground as the earlier conversation between Tantalus and Thyestes, where Thyestes had a negative retort to every statement Tantalus made, and yet this time Thyestes meekly bows to Atreus' offer. Because Thyestes so desperately wants what is offered to him, Atreus does not have to work very hard in order to give it to him, a fact of which Atreus is no doubt well aware.

[145] Boyle (2017, 274-275) observes that: 'Atrean asides underscore the king's control not only of the "events" of the drama, but of its very structure and pace, as he halts or delays the action at will. What is also displayed in Atreus' long asides is the pleasure he derives from this power and his delight in sharing his pleasure with the audience… a breaking of the "fourth wall"…' Asides like this are important for forging a persuasive connection between Atreus and the audience, unlike Thyestes, who does not have the control and power that his brother possesses. Most of Thyestes' asides and soliloquys only serve to sure up what Atreus has already said about him.

In the next act, we see Atreus only through the words of the messenger, but the planning and organisation that has gone into this scene comes across clearly.[146] In the earlier chapter I examined Thyestes' repeated unwilling step, and his vacillating mindset. Atreus, on the other hand, does not allow his emotions to get the better of him, so that they do not impede his progress. Atreus' pedantic, ritualised process of killing Thyestes' children is a compelling example of this, because the method and order Atreus brings to this ceremony has both a comforting and alienating effect. As Hornby (1986, 64) argues, ceremonies 'imply an order and permanence in the surrounding world'; they carry a consistency and rigidity of form which can be contextualised internally and externally of the text itself. A funeral, for example, with its associated emotions, both implicit and explicit, is a readily recognisable ceremony, and its structure provides order and continuity to the audience, who can recognise the next step to be taken and be comforted by its familiarity, meaning the 'pattern or form is always of the highest importance' (Hornby 1986, 51) for forging a connection between the participants, the audience, and their engagement with the plot.

Thus, the attention to detail which Atreus observes forms a ritualised connection with the audience, even as the act itself inspires horror. That the ritual is narrated by the *nuntius* adds a further level of order and control to the narrative; the

[146] Tarrant (1985, 189) notes that: 'Atreus directs the "sacrifice" with his customary energy, insisting on complete verisimilitude… the sacrificial slaughter is a ritual by which Atreus affirms (or perhaps establishes) his status as a god.' This step in the plan is the essential one, the moment which will reestablish the power that Atreus feels that he has lost, and leads inevitably to the notion of *'dimitto superos; summa votorum attigi'* in line 888.

messenger can unfold the story logically, mirroring Atreus' own logical progression through the act itself, while emphasising the centrality of Atreus' role:[147]

> *Ipse est sacerdos; ipse funesta prece*
> *letale carmen ore violento canit,*
> *stat ipse ad aras, ipse devotos neci*
> *contrectat et componit et ferro admovet;*
> *attendit ipse – nulla pars sacri perit.* (691-695)

> He himself is priest; he himself with violent speech sings the death
> song with fatal prayer, he himself stands at the altar,
> he himself handles those promised to death,
> brings them together and moves towards the knife;
> he himself attends – no part of the ritual is undone.

This repeated and insistent use of *ipse* emphasises the crime that Atreus is perpetrating, the power that he wields, and the precision with which he carries out each specific task. This scene is the penultimate step in the culmination of Atreus' plan; it is here that he moves from stage manager to performer,[148] and the solemnity with which he carries out the role is indicative of the importance that this task holds

[147] Boyle (2017, cix) observes: 'Metatheatrical and metaliterary language and motifs punctuate the scene, in which the varied pace, pauses, and crescendo of the narrative are those of a tragic drama, and the paradoxical amalgam of revulsion and attraction, horror and pleasure experienced by the narrator-poet-Messenger not only intimates the "Atreus" in every man, but mirrors, even prescribes, the audience's response.' Certainly, this scene reveals the true horror and extent of Atreus' power, as he moves from the planning phase to the carrying out of his plan. The order and method of the messenger's speech forces the reader/viewer to see what is happening.

[148] Boyle (2017, 336) comments: 'Note the metatheatrical undercurrent of Atreus' sacrificial preparations, as he arranges the props for the scene, and 'costumes' and positions the main actors (*personae mutae*). He is even responsible for the *letale carmen* itself.' Atreus' attention to detail speaks to his determination and conviction.

for executing his plan[149]. Atreus must depend on no one; every detail must be observed because it is essential that this plan is carried out without difficulty.

As much as a ritual or ceremony within a play has a recognisable and stabilising effect on the audience, arguably so too does it have a steadying effect on Atreus, and then in turn a stabilising effect between the audience and Atreus. Here Atreus plays a role, much as he has previously played the role of affectionate brother, and this role gives further depth to his character. It is not necessarily that this role forges a link between Atreus and the audience, in that the act garners sympathy for Atreus, but that Atreus' consistency of behaviour, and commitment to purpose, is clearly conveyed.

Finally, I would like to return to the link between Atreus and Sadean sadists, which I have previously explored. The similarities between Atreus and the sadists offers much by way of understanding Atreus' comparatively greater narrative powers. In reading Sade we appreciated that he inverts typical Catholic meaning in order to present a doctrine that wholeheartedly embraces this inversion. That which would stereotypically be considered a 'virtue' for a Catholic becomes a 'vice' in Sade, and similarly that which would be considered a Catholic 'vice' becomes a Sadean 'virtue'. There is an unrelenting consistency to this inversion: the lines between Sadean vice and virtue do not blur, nor do Sade's characters brook any unnecessary abandonment of their fundamental principles. This very clear understanding of their desires and principles makes them more reliable characters than Justine, because their clarity of purpose affords them a far greater awareness.

[149] Schiesaro (2003, 88) argues that this is the moment where Atreus begins to quell his doubts about the paternity of his children: 'The careful investigation of the boys' entrails (755-8) is a *mise en abyme* of the only (impossible) "inspection" which could actually assuage Atreus' doubts, that of his adulterous, even incestuous, wife.' Arguably, this is another reason for Atreus' precision: everything must be done correctly, given what he believes is at stake.

While Thyestes labours under his vacillating desires and conflicting thoughts, Atreus demonstrates control and awareness. Like Sadean sadists, Atreus suffers no apprehension about how to behave, whether to dissimulate in order to 'play' the role of a good king, one who exercises *clementia*. Atreus can play a role if necessary, but only for a particular purpose: to sure up the outward façade and strengthen the fortress within. That is, Atreus maintains tight control over his environment: his behaviour dictates how it operates; he effectively conceals his feelings and predilections, if necessary, in order to maintain a benign outward façade that protects his concealed motives. Likewise, Sade's sadists often maintained an external façade of 'normality', which the sadists promulgated only to protect their private lifestyle. It creates an ease of functionality for the sadists to carry out their plans unhindered, but represents no regard whatsoever for the behaviours which they are shamming. Comparatively, Atreus has a far greater level of control over his behaviour and actions than Thyestes does, and in turn that makes him a more trustworthy and reliable character.

For Atreus, gaining revenge on Thyestes is his motivating force, and thus this single-minded purpose becomes the constant modulating force for Atreus' behaviour. It is his tight control over his *ira*, his constant awareness of it, which prevents him from making hasty and uninformed decisions, and which gives a twisted logic to his behaviour.[150] Throughout the play Atreus does not waver from the philosophy that he outlines in his conversation with the *satelles*. In his mind, the course of action that he takes is patently right and rational, and thus for him it is morally right. Atreus' goal is to take revenge on Thyestes, which will have the consequence of bringing him pleasure, and give him vindication for the wrongs that he feels he has suffered as a

[150] Braden (1985, 42): 'Senecan drama reaches its heights not in a vision of ambient, impersonal evil, but in one of *furor* concentrated, triumphantly embodied in a single character.' Atreus is a prime example of this kind of concentrated *furor*. He harnesses his anger to guarantee his triumph, rather than letting his emotions control him, as Thyestes does.

result of Thyestes' actions. For Atreus, an action which has these consequences is patently rational; if he were not to take revenge on Thyestes, then he would remain in his current perpetual state of impotent rage, which would be irrational. This means that any further actions Atreus takes in order to achieve his goal are defined as rational and irrational, depending on their eventual impact on his ultimate goals.[151] It is in this way that he can rationalise killing Thyestes' children, his own nephews: if they did not die, his plan would fail, which would be a negative and hence irrational outcome.

Returning to the metatheatricality of myth, this adds another layer of complexity to Atreus' characterisation. Senecan characters often seem to have an awareness of their own mythological persona; as Rosenmeyer (1996, 508) observes: 'Senecan dramaturgy, where the character's lines suggest, not that they act out privileged parts in a well-known tale, but that they have read the version by Sophocles or Astydamas and are trying to improve on it.' Certainly Atreus displays this awareness of his own mythology; lines such as *dignum est Thyeste facinus et dignum Atreo… uterque faciat* (it is a deed worthy of Thyestes and worthy of Atreus… let them each make it theirs, 271-272) seem to confirm this. Indeed, much of Atreus' opening words are like a call to arms, setting the parameters for the character that he wants to become.[152]

Conversely, Thyestes shows little awareness of his own mythology, or indeed little awareness of his own self, instead presenting this quasi-Stoic façade, which is

[151] Star (2012, 65) notes that: 'In the Senecan corpus, the performance of virtue and the performance of vice are set in the same linguistic and imperatival terms… His tragedies reveal how the passions are ultimately related to and based upon ideas of control and rationality.' That is, Atreus embraces a kind of inverted Stoicism, where he achieves *constantia* through harnessing his *ira* and *furor*, directing it all into his plan to take revenge on Thyestes. His self-command of his passions and his mental consistency ultimately make him a far more successful "Stoic" than Thyestes pretends to be. See Davis (2003, 65-66) for further discussion on how Atreus embodies Stoic values.

[152] In this respect, Braden (1985, 42) points out that Atreus' opening words, particularly identifying himself as a mere *iratus Atreus,* is a 'confrontation with a self image to live up to.'

scarcely credible. An explanation for Thyestes' pseudo-Stoicism is his masochistic character. The earlier chapter explored the concept of masochistic delusion, and how Thyestes has fooled himself into returning home by quelling his paranoia and rejecting rational thought. Arguably, this delusion manifests in several aspects of his behaviour, including his Stoic façade. In attempting to embrace a Stoic disposition, Thyestes can assure himself that his motives for returning home are pure, rather than being motivated by greed or a lust for power. He returns again and again to reiterating his desire for simpler things, in an attempt to convince himself that he no longer desires the throne and its attached advantages. This persona then forms part of his delusion, a defence against the danger that he tries so hard to deny. I will explore Thyestes' "Stoic" persona further in a moment.

The other element of Thyestes' masochistic persona that is integral to the way the drama unfolds is his use of masochism as a defensive measure. This also coalesces with Thyestes' masochistic delusion, and serves to suppress Thyestes' doubts. Loewenstein (1995, 36) discusses the intersection of passivity and anxiety in the masochistic persona, observing that: '…the masochist uses a mechanism generally designed to deal with anxiety… namely, to anticipate actively what might be feared to occur to one passively. By imagining or producing scenes of torture or punishment which he himself devises, the masochist excludes the possibility of being tortured or punished in an unexpected or uncontrollable way.' This is arguably akin to a worst-case scenario defence, where the masochist tries to quash their fears by imagining that things could not possibly be as bad as what they anticipate. In Thyestes' case, he is filled with trepidation at returning to Atreus, and tries to prepare himself by anticipating what may await him. Unfortunately for Thyestes, he does not have the

cognitive abilities that Atreus has, and his imagination conjures up amorphous worries, without any specific notions against which to defend himself.

Thyestes is astute enough, initially, to recognise that there is most likely a trick at work (*errat hic aliquis dolus*, 473), but when Tantalus presses him to explain what kind of trick he fears, Thyestes can only answer '*omnem… tantum potest quantum odit*' (everything… his power is as great as his hate, 483-484). This discussion frames the apocalyptic statement, which I explored in the previous chapter, where Thyestes points out that, amongst other things, fire would join with water before Atreus loved him (476-482). This statement shows not only the paradoxical nature of Thyestes' decision to go home, but also an apparent attempt to anticipate the worst possible outcome: surely nothing that awaits him could be worse than what he fears Atreus is capable of enacting.

Thyestes remains passive in his decision-making, ending his back and forth about staying and going by ceding control to Tantalus (*ego vos sequor, non duco*, 489). He purposefully sacrifices control and awareness with this action, leaving the choice in Tantalus' hand. This is in line with another masochistic defence mechanism, where the masochist makes a partial sacrifice in an attempt at self-preservation. As Nacht (1995, 19) explains: '…masochism, an apparently paradoxical reaction, is a means of defence, pathological self-defence… things proceed as if the masochist, faced with the danger of losing everything… consents to a partial sacrifice to save the rest.' Thyestes surrenders control to Tantalus, in order to pass the responsibility to him. Rather than trying to unite thought and action himself, he can force his unwilling step (cf. *nolentem gradum*, 420) to follow Tantalus. In this way, he can also maintain his masochistic delusion that he does not desire the throne: rather than returning to take power, he simply follows his son.

Importantly, Nacht (1995, 19) also notes that this 'sacrifice' is not a conscious decision by the masochist, and is often more detrimental than an alternative course: '[it is] a mug's game, however, at least in the eyes of the beholder; for the sufferings and sacrifices which the masochist inflicts on himself are real, whereas the danger against which he struggles is only a fiction of the unconscious.' Here, danger awaits by returning to Atreus, and that danger comes to fruition precisely because Thyestes allows himself to be led home, thus bringing the danger upon himself. Further, despite his stated concern that his sons are the reason for his fear (*vos facitis mihi Atrea timendum*, 485-486), he gives Tantalus the power to lead them all into danger. If Thyestes had taken control and decided not to go, the danger would not exist.

This kind of self-sacrifice links Thyestes' behaviour to similar patterns that we have seen before with Justine. Justine sacrificed her freedom in order to maintain her Catholic virtue, which was itself a 'mug's game', given that her virtue got her nowhere. This sacrifice was likewise not seen as such by her, because she identified herself by her religion, and could not conceive of the possibility of abrogating her virtue. This also contributed to her unreliability, because her skewed and narrowed perspective left her incapable of fully understanding what was happening around her, and unable to conceive of a way to extricate herself effectively from the situation. Likewise, Thyestes' decision to cede control to Tantalus is reminiscent of the way that Encolpius frequently allowed himself to be controlled by a multiplicity of other characters. This passivity often affected Encolpius' narration, as he was unable to fully engage with what was happening around him, or to see his way clear of a situation. Thyestes has a greater awareness of what may await him, but he does not have the control to try to prevent it; his desire for power overrules his perceptive abilities.

I return now to Thyestes' "Stoicism", to illustrate why it is that Thyestes cannot mislead the reader through his narrative, and that therefore he is not an unreliable narrator in the same way that Justine, Encolpius, and Catullus are. Thyestes' first appearance presents a confection of disparate statements, which in turn conflicts with his actions. While at first blush it may appear that Thyestes suffers under the same moral masochism as Justine, as the play continues it becomes apparent that Thyestes' veneer of Stoicism exists perhaps only to make exile more bearable, and that beneath that he is desperate to reclaim his former power. In presenting himself as akin to a Stoic Sage, Thyestes tries to convince not only himself, but – unsuccessfully – the viewer. This is part of Thyestes' masochistic delusion: if he convinces himself that he has no desire for power, he can manage his time in exile.

We see elements of the Stoic sage when Thyestes first appears. His discussion of a yearning for simplicity, when he is travelling to meet Atreus, speaks to a character who has embraced nature and the rationality that stems from it, and uses 'living with nature' to guide his decisions and actions:[153]

> *repete silvestres fugas*
> *saltusque densos potius et mixtam feris*
> *similemque vitam…* (412-414)
>
> Seek again your forest retreats and the dense woodlands,
> and the life shared with beasts and like to theirs.

[153] See Inwood (1985, 105) and Schofield (2003, 239-246) for further discussion on the early Stoic notions of living consistently with nature, and its meaning.

Pratt (1948, 5) observes that: 'Seneca presents essentially the Stoic dogma that happiness consists in the development of a strong and upright spirit which conquers both internal and external evil.'[154] Thyestes initially presents as a man who has found contentment in nature, and uses this to resist internal weakness and external attack. Thyestes appears to recognise that the greatest external threat to his *humanitas* is the crown, and the inherent dangers that power brings with it:[155]

> *...clarus hic regni nitor*
> *fulgore non est quod oculos falso auferat;*
> *cum quod datur spectabis, et dantem aspice.* (414-416)
>
> The bright splendour of kingship
> should not blind my eyes with its false glitter;
> when you look at a gift, look at the giver too.

This shows that not only is Thyestes aware of the risks of returning home, but is specifically aware that Atreus is the danger. To some degree, Thyestes has the same awareness of Atreus' inherent characteristics as Atreus has of Thyestes', and uses this awareness to counsel himself against returning home. Thyestes here identifies that refusing to go would be the rational action, and that returning home to Atreus is irrational, given that 'the Stoic Sage is free from passions (*apatheia*) and he is happy

[154] Veyne (2003) provides thorough discussion on Seneca's Stoicism.
[155] See Strange (2004, 32-51) for further discussion on the passions and decision-making in Stoicism.

because he is not manipulated and drawn by such irrational forces' (Yu 2008, 14).[156] Arguably, the only way that Thyestes could continue on to Atreus would be if his motivation for returning home was one that was in line with Stoic values, that is, a morally right action. In this respect, Inwood (1986, 551) observes the difference between appropriate action and moral action for a Stoic Sage:

> When doing an appropriate action, the sage can fail – appropriate actions, it should be said, include actions like courageous behaviour, generous behaviour, etc., as well as actions like keeping healthy and taking care of one's family. In all these things one may fail and still be a sage. But a morally *right* action is one that cannot fail; such actions are not, of course, a wholly distinct set of things; rather, a morally right action is an appropriate action done in such a manner that, under the description that counts the most of all, it cannot fail.

I will not examine the idea of morally right action in relation to Thyestes, as his resounding failure seems to preclude such a point, but I will return to the notion shortly in respect of Atreus' behaviour. In terms of appropriate action, if there were an element of selfless necessity motivating Thyestes' behaviour, his eventual failure could still see his Stoic nature remain intact – if, for example, he had returned home in order to achieve a positive outcome for others, like the people or his children. It would still be important for Thyestes to illustrate appropriate Stoic behaviour on his

[156] Star (2012, 26-27) notes that Seneca frequently brings together Stoic self-command and Roman military ideals: 'He describes the "battle within," the battle for self-mastery and consistency against the passions and mental fluctuation… self-command, power over one's self, takes precedence…' Through this scene with Thyestes and Tantalus, we see the 'battle within' play out in Thyestes' speech, but it is clear that he cannot overcome his fluctuating mindset, and thus cannot exercise command of the self. As a point of comparison, Atreus, on the other hand, exercises self-command, effectively overcoming his doubts, and harnessing his passions and directing them into single-minded purpose.

way home, in order for his behaviour to be understood as Stoic. Examining Thyestes' behaviour and speech either side of the Stoic lines of 412-416 shows clearly how Thyestes' masochist delusion gives the lie to these Stoic notions.

As Schiesaro (2003, 148) notes: 'Stoic sages, notoriously, should avoid hopes and fears alike', and that Thyestes' statement of *optata patriae tecta et Argolicas opes* (the longed-for homes of my fatherland and Argive wealth, 404) shows immediately his hopes for a long-desired homecoming. Boyle (2017, 248-249) similarly notes: 'The bipartite structure – joy at returning home (404-11), fear of Atreus (412-30) – makes for easy comprehension by an audience.' Indeed, this bipartite structure frames Thyestes' "Stoic" musings. He tries to convince himself not to give into his hopes, taking refuge in the tenets of Stoic goodness and rationality, only to lapse into fear shortly after:[157]

> *Modo inter illa, quae putant cuncti aspera*
> *fortis fui laetusque; nunc contra in metus*
> *revolvor; animus haeret ac retro cupit*
> *corpus referre, moveo nolentem gradum.* (417-420)

> Recently, amongst such fortune, which all count as adverse, I was
> strong and joyful; now, in opposition, I am returning into fears;
> my spirit is stalled and, my body desiring to turn back,
> I move unwilling step along.

[157] See Lagrée (2004, 148-176) for further discussion of *constantia* in Stoicism, and Becker (2004, 250-276) on Stoic emotion.

The exchange with Tantalus further illustrates Thyestes' vacillating mindset, and makes clear that Thyestes understands that the rational course of action is to turn back (*reflecte gressum, dum licet, teque eripe*, 428). He tries to explain to Tantalus the dangers that his return presents, and the dangers that exist in kingship itself:

> *dum excelsus steti,*
> *numquam pavere destiti atque ipsum mei*
> *ferrum timere lateris. o quantum bonum est*
> *obstare nulli, capere securas dapes*
> *humi iacentem! scelera non intrant casas*
> *tutusque mensa capitur angusta cibus;*
> *venenum in auro bibitur.* (447-453)

> While I stood high, I never ceased to fear,
> even fearing the sword at my own side.
> Oh, how good it is to stand in no one's way,
> to enjoy an untroubled meal lying on the ground.
> Crime does not come to lowly hovels,
> one is safe eating at a narrow table;
> poison is drunk in gold.

As Tantalus probes Thyestes' worries more, Thyestes reveals that his belief is that great kingship is the power to cope without kingship (*immane regnum est posse sine regno pati*, 470) and that his fear of Atreus stems specifically from a fear for his sons: *pro me nihil iam metuo. vos facitis mihi Atrea timendum* (I now no longer fear

for myself. You make me fear Atreus, 485-486). These fears – apparently selfless – themselves are not Stoic, as I have already mentioned, but they are also not persuasive. Despite the range of worries that Thyestes outlines, and the easy solution for avoiding such fears, they cannot outweigh his desire for the crown. By his own definition, Thyestes is no great king, and 'he is no Stoic sage' (Boyle 2017, 250).

Thyestes is an inconstant character. He lacks the awareness and consistency to embody fully a Stoic disposition.[158] Lines such as '*occurret Argos, populus occurret frequens*' (411) betray Thyestes' desire to regain the crown, and with it the admiration and attention of the people.[159] In this respect, Boyle (1997, 50) points out a similarity between Tantalus' hunger and Thyestes' desire, '…like old Tantalus' "ingrained hunger" (97), it lies within, able to be rekindled when the prospect of "wealth", *divitiae*, draws near.' Further, the ease with which he accepts Atreus' offer of shared kingship gives the lie to his earlier words:

> *T: ...respuere certum est regna consilium mihi.*
>
> *A: Meam relinquam, nisi tuam partem accipis.*
>
> *T: Accipio; regni nomen impositi feram,*
>
> *sed iura et arma servient mecum tibi.* (540 – 543)

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[158] Star (2012, 37) notes that: 'In his description of the *summum bonum* [*De vita beata*, 8.6), Seneca states that an essential component of the ideal of psychological consistency is the mind (*mens*) doing all things *by its own command*.' Thyestes instead chooses to hand control over to Tantalus, thus illustrating his psychological inconsistency.

[159] Braden (1985, 17) states: 'Stoicism's central strength is its calculus of adaptation to unchangeable realities. Surrendering the world's goods, we find them false and learn how to want what we have instead of striving for what we want.' This is precisely what Thyestes is unable to do, because he is not a true Stoic. His desire to regain the riches and luxuries associated with the throne overrides any appreciation for what he has in exile.

T: To refuse the throne is my certain plan.

A: I shall abandon mine, unless you accept your part.

T: I accept; I will bear the name of king placed on me,
but laws and arms along with me shall be subservient to you.

Thyestes requires little persuasion to accept the power and wealth that Atreus offers, similarly to how quickly Tantalus persuaded him to continue on to meet Atreus earlier (421 ff.). The ease with which Atreus is able to persuade Thyestes only serves to assure Atreus further that Thyestes is exactly what he perceives him to be: power hungry and greedy.

Thus, Atreus' engagement with his mythological self, along with his consistency and control, is why his narrative is more powerful and more persuasive than Thyestes': Atreus assumes his identity, rather than being the unwilling and unknowing victim of mythology that Thyestes is. Atreus' positive or aggressive characteristics in turn give greater weight to his storytelling ability. As we have seen, drama gives the audience a greater awareness of the entirety of the plot, and they can make value judgments according to the combined sum of what they see. Comparatively, Atreus' words support and extend on the words of the Fury in prologue, which metatheatrically supports how the audience understands the myth, which further strengthens the audience's trust in Atreus' words. Thyestes, comparatively, seems ignorant of the role that he plays. His masochistic persona means that he submits readily to the will of others, and uses passivity and delusion as a means of defence. He tries to assume a Stoic persona, but ultimately this exposes his

own delusion. Nothing that Thyestes does proves Atreus wrong in his assessment of Thyestes (Davis 2003, 44). Where Atreus can play a role successfully, Thyestes is unable to sustain a persona; his desire for the crown ultimately controls him, revealing his inconsistency. His masochistic persona means that the audience can clearly see his inconstancy, and, as a cumulative result of the layers of dramatic narrative, knows that his words are not reliable.

Conclusion

'My manner of thinking, so you say, cannot be approved. Do you suppose I care? A poor fool indeed is he who adopts a manner of thinking for others! My manner of thinking… holds with my existence, and the way I am made. It is not in my power to alter it; and were it, I'd not do so.' D.A.F. de Sade.[160]

A common theme of the masochistic persona is the masochist's ineducable nature. Though they may be bent to the will of others, be led and misled, they do not learn, and they do not adapt. As we have seen, our characters did not change their behaviour to any extent over time, but remained suffering under the same masochistic symptoms. There are several reasons for this: a persona that is rooted in actively sacrificing agency is difficult to change, because one is not necessarily aware of what is happening, and that their agency is there to reclaim; secondly, the masochist may not want to reclaim that agency, because to do so would be to end their suffering, and the masochist does not necessarily want to do this. In this thesis, this was perhaps most obvious in the case of Catullus: it was he who possessed the most power, and yet refused to use that power, because to do so would end his suffering, and the story that he has to tell. Catullus can no longer suffer at Lesbia's hands, if he asserts his patriarchal powers and removes himself from her.

This refusal to reclaim agency is critical to my reading of masochism in classical literature. I have shown that all these narratives are based around an essential refusal to change, to adapt, and to overcome. In failing to do these things, our

[160] Sade writes this in a letter to his wife, which is quoted in Seaver & Wainhouse's edition of *Justine* (1966, iv).

masochists bear out the narrative. Justine continues to be victimised by the libertines; she does not transform – as Barthes (1976, 143) ably points out she could do – and join their ranks, effectively ending her suffering; Encolpius does not learn self-control, or to assert himself in any meaningful way, but continues to be the perennial stooge; Catullus loves Lesbia limitlessly, and is her constant victim; and Thyestes does not rationalise his thoughts and emotions, and returns to Atreus with no real plan as to how to handle it, beyond reclaiming the throne. Their masochistic natures allow them to be propelled along, to bring about the critical moments in the text, and to be unable to resolve them.

To bring these points together, let us recall the way that Justine's masochism fulfils the premise of the novel. As we observed in the second Sadean chapter, Sade's goal, as the implied author, is to give voice to the libertines and their philosophies. To give ample opportunity for this to happen, they need a victim who will not only listen, but who will endure. Justine's body is almost indestructible. She survives through multiple brandings, rapes, dissections, and physical attacks, but her body remains virtually unmarked. Justine's body becomes emblematic of the unchanged masochistic persona: her body, like her inherent masochism, cannot transform or be altered. As Dipiero (1994, 248) observes: 'Justine undergoes a bizarre and ceaseless series of unthinkable tortures and abuses; what is more remarkable than the ordeals she undergoes, however, is the fact that her body never retains a trace of the violence done to her.' This must be so, in order for Justine to move from libertine to libertine, and give them the opportunity to outline their philosophies.

Beyond her almost indestructible body (bearing in mind that it is eventually destroyed by an act of nature, when Sade has exhausted his libertine narrative), Justine's masochism is intrinsic to highlighting the sadism of Sade's libertines, and

allowing them to flourish. As the first section illustrated, Justine listens, but she does not hear. She remains unswayed by anything the libertines say, and remains committed to her religion. Justine's Catholicism is the seat of her masochism, and her stubborn adherence to her virtue preserves and extends her suffering. It gives voice to the libertines, and that is the essential plot of the story. Justine – and Justine's body – does not change, and so it is not a text that follows her misadventures to some eventual realisation, or to a noble rescue and salvation for Justine; the point of the text is the libertines themselves, and Justine's unrelenting masochism facilitates this.

As we have seen, Encolpius' masochism is also integral to the way that the text unfolds. He is passive, submissive, and frequently overwhelmed, and this does not change as the text progresses. The confusion that causes him to be led into a brothel at the beginning of the extant text (7) is still present at the end, when he seeks out a cure for his impotence from Oenothea (134-137). While Encolpius' mood changes frequently, his underlying characteristics do not change. Encolpius' masochism enables the episodic nature of the text. Because he is so susceptible to manipulation, Encolpius can be easily steered along from place to place. The comparison with Eumolpus that I explored in the first section illustrated the way that Encolpius surrenders control to other people. Where Eumolpus takes charge of a scenario, and, like a skilled conman, adapts to different scenarios and manipulates situations to take the fullest advantage of them, Encolpius could not exert his influence, and was unable to play a role for any length of time, as Eumolpus does on Croton, for example.

In the second section, we saw how Encolpius' passivity facilitates the episodic structure of the text. Taking up Schmeling's work on the nature and structure of the text, I illustrated how Encolpius' masochism makes him the perfect character for a

narrative that is structured by scenario. His masochistic surrendering of agency means that he can extend the length of an episode, as he submits to the control of other characters. It also means that Petronius can employ a series of 'guest stars' in each episode, who can direct the course of the scene, and take centre stage at certain times, when Encolpius becomes too overwhelmed and retreats into direct speech. We saw this clearly in the *Cena Trimalchionis*, a travesty of a symposium, where Encolpius eventually stopped asking questions himself, and Trimalchio and his cohort took over the narrative. Encolpius does not learn or change as the text progresses, enabling the episodic structure, where it is as if Encolpius resets each time, forgetting all that he may have learned or observed, and throwing himself melodramatically into one incident after another.

Likewise, Catullus exhibits little change over the course of the Lesbia poems. His attitude towards Lesbia may change, but his own behaviour, and understanding of his own behaviour, does not vary in any meaningful way. It is because of his masochistic nature that he does not change, because he displaces all responsibility onto Lesbia, and he does not perceive that he is complicit in his suffering. As we have seen, Catullus' masochism operates on several levels: firstly, he defines his relationship with Lesbia in a way that notionally gives her all the power. Through poems 5 and 7, Catullus seeks to cast aside his patriarchal powers, and to give control to Lesbia. When Catullus perceives that this is not working as successfully as he had intended it to do, he places the blame entirely on Lesbia, exhibiting masochistic displacement of blame. He also demonstrates masochistic passivity, because despite recognising that he is unhappy because of Lesbia, he cannot rouse himself to do anything about it directly.

In the second Catullus chapter, we examined Catullus' relationship with Lesbia through the lens of the masochistic contract. This brought together the elements of Catullus' masochistic behaviour that the first chapter identified. Catullus' innate desire to suffer meant that he victimised Lesbia, forcing her to be the agent of his suffering. Most importantly, however, this behaviour was subconscious: in Catullus' mind, he was the victim of Lesbia's coldness and cruelty. This reading of Catullus brings a new perspective to the Lesbia poems, that subconsciously Catullus wants to suffer, and that is why he defines his relationship with Lesbia in such a way, and why he will not actively do anything to change his situation.

Finally, Thyestes' behaviour is perhaps more difficult to pinpoint than the other characters, because he so often hides behind his own delusions. Arguably, rather than saying that his behaviour does not change, his inherent nature does not change across the text. He is still the victim of Atreus' psychological mind games, even after his punishment has been carried out and revealed. It is Atreus, the victor, who has the last word in the play, not Thyestes: *te puniendum liberis trado tuis* (1112). As we have seen, Thyestes' masochism manifests in two central ways: as a suppressive mechanism to quell his paranoia, resulting in Stoic delusion and passivity, and as unconscious, repressed guilt, with the two masochistic elements cumulatively causing his vacillating mindset.

In the second section, we saw that Thyestes' masochism ultimately means that his voice lacks impact or persuasiveness. Alongside Atreus, whose power is virtually limitless, the reader is unlikely to buy into what Thyestes says. His masochism affects his self-awareness, his rationality, and his perspicacity. He suspects a trick, but cannot imagine what it could be; he claims to be alert, but takes the crown straightaway from Atreus, and sits down to glut himself with food and wine. His masochism causes his

downfall. The central point I have illustrated with *Thyestes* is not only that the play glorifies Atreus' victory, but it places Thyestes as the victim of his weakness. All Atreus' careful scheming and planning would have been for nought, if Thyestes had not returned home. Thyestes' masochism enables the plot to unfold; it brings about the mythological inevitability. The Fury instigates the drama, but it is Thyestes' masochism that seals his fate.

Masochism is a useful and variegated literary device. It has a direct and pervasive impact on textual narratives, and can do so across a variety of genres. It can suspend and prolong narratives, bring about plot resolutions, and facilitate generic exploration. Reading classical texts through a masochistic lens, as I have shown, reveals different interpretive angles. Encolpius' masochism makes him chameleon-like, moving from genre to genre, never quite adapting himself, but facilitating the adaptation of others; Catullus is not Lesbia's victim, but the deliberate agent of his own suffering; and Thyestes is not only Atreus' victim, but the victim of his own masochistic delusion, a delusion that sends him home and into the midst of Atreus' machinations. The Marquis de Sade's use of masochism, obvious and deliberate as it is, allowed me to identify masochistic elements in my classical characters, and to demonstrate how these elements are crucial in shaping the texts that contain them.

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